

*The Australian*

# WOMEN'S WEEKLY

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## KITTY PANTON,

vivacious Sydney model (and busy housewife, too) says . . .



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about housework spoiling your hands

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ANSELL RUBBER GLOVES"



Lovely model—and mother—Mrs. Kitty Pantan says: "I'm never without my Ansell Rubber Gloves in the kitchen, laundry, for mopping, sweeping, polishing—in fact, all housework. They're so easy to work with and such certain hand protection."



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# The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

FEBRUARY 3, 1954

29 JAN 1954

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## STANDARDS FOR CLOTHES SIZES

WOMEN will welcome the news that the Standards Association of Australia is tackling the problem of standardising clothing sizes.

For a long time both shoppers and retailers have been inconvenienced by the variations in sizes of clothing.

One manufacturer's SSW label often means something quite different from another's.

The confusion is increased by the fact that on women's clothing several kinds of markings are used.

A dress size may be indicated by the bust measurement, by the American size numbers (12, 14, 16, 18), or by the extremely variable SSW, SW, W, and OS.

While women are skilled at interpreting these markings, they suspect that certain manufacturers label clothing with the intention of flattering the buyer into believing she is smaller than she is.

For men the problem is even more difficult, since, lacking women's deep interest in clothes, they are not such experts in the field.

Although few housewives are familiar with the work of the Standards Association, which covers an immense field, it touches many aspects of their daily life.

It is through the association's work that many standards, including those of safety, are laid down. It has ensured, for instance, that all electrical appliances sold conform to safety requirements. Furniture buyers may now look for a label which guarantees a certain standard of quality.

The job on clothing sizes may not be as vital as some the association has undertaken, but the results will be welcomed by both men and women.

## Our cover:

Our cover this week is artist Bonar Dunlop's imaginative painting of a scene on Sydney Harbor on the morning of February 3, 1954—the arrival in S.S. Gothic of Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

## This week:

The superb full-page pictures of Her Majesty the Queen in the Waitomo Caves and at a "whistle stop," which we published in our last two issues, are surpassed, we think, by this week's brilliant candid portrait. The occasion was the investiture which the Queen held at the Wellington Town Hall—possibly the most glittering and gay event in the Royal tour to date. Staff photographer Clive Thompson has caught the Queen in one of her happiest moments. Knowing that many people will want to frame the picture, we have put as little type as possible on it—just the date line and the page number.

## Next week:

Brilliant U.S. mystery writer Stuart Palmer is the author of next week's free novel, "Four Lost Ladies," in which readers will meet again that most unusual amateur detective, retired schoolteacher Miss Hildergarde Withers. Miss Withers, the bane of the New York Metropolitan Police Force and the long-suffering Inspector Oscar Piper, decides that an old friend, who should have sent her a Christmas card and didn't, has been murdered; and that not only her friend, but three other lonely, unattached, middle-aged females have been despatched. Entertaining light comedy is provided by Miss Withers' new dog, a nonsensical apricot-colored poodle named Talleyrand.

If you have only a bit of soil, not a garden, or if the way your backyard is arranged doesn't please you, now is the time to be thinking about planning a garden that will give you real pleasure in the years ahead. Next week we have a long article full of practical advice on this subject. In our cookery section we have a whole swag of recipes for tomatoes, which have been so cheap and plentiful this summer.

## Love and passion through a young boy's eyes

Book review by HELEN FRIZELL

THE life of Leo, "The Go-Between" of L. P. Hartley's novel of that name, follows the course of the 20th century—an age which began with promise, and went instead into the paths of war and frustration.

Leo, in late middle-age, looks back to wonder why the change from sun to storm occurred.

In the case of the century the deluge came in the hot summer of 1914; in the case of the boy it was July, 1900.

With extraordinary insight, Mr. Hartley tells of a 12-year-old boy who goes that month to spend a holiday with wealthy acquaintances in Norfolk.

Completely at home with his own age group, he cannot understand adult behaviour, and is as baffled by it as are some adults when confronted with childish likes and dislikes.

This child, ignorant of the facts of life and love, is used as a go-between for Marian Maudsley, the daughter of the house, and her lover, Ted Burgess, a local farmer.

Leo thinks Marian all that is wonderful. She has given him a green suit (and the color has significance). She promises him a bicycle. He is her friend, her little "postman" who carries business letters between the Hall and the farm.

Soon, however, he senses that there is more

in the letters than business. There is love and passion. Suspected by Mrs. Maudsley—who wants her daughter to marry Lord Trimmingham—the unfortunate go-between becomes frightened by the responsibility of keeping his secret.

In desperation he writes to his mother, asking that she send a telegram which will enable him to return home. Reprieve does not come. A schoolboyish spell (in which he utilises berries from the deadly nightshade) fails.

With the failure comes the storm and the lightning, striking down one of the three adults, and blasting for years to come Leo's own life.

Only in his 60's does Leo discover an old diary, from which he reassesses the facts, and acts upon them.

Mr. Hartley has written the book in a taut, nervous style, and as a psychological study of a child's mind the novel is quite brilliant.

If the adults in the story seem to be strangely motivated, and lacking solidity, it is because they are viewed through a child's eyes, and not through those of a contemporary.

Critical readers will wonder how Mr. Hartley—no boy—achieved this effect. They will certainly find his book worth reading and his craftsmanship worth watching.

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BRUSHES BY

Addis

AB31



She was very curious to know why  
her aunt was always called . . . . .

# POOR PHOEBE

ILLUSTRATED BY BOOTH ROYD

**A**LL summer Rose sat up there in the attic. Rose was at an awkward age. She wanted to be alone. In the attic the family put the things they had worn out or tired of seeing. Rose made herself a place under the window, not at all pretty, not particularly comfortable, but private.

No one found it and set it to rights when her back was turned. In June she wrote "Rose Rankin" in the dust on the window-ledge. In August it was still there.

She sat with her legs curled under her and stared at the hot pearly sky. It was being a difficult summer. Tennis bored her, she couldn't be bothered to swim. She would start something in a frenzy of enthusiasm and abandon it less than half done. She didn't know what she wanted. If she could sit alone in the attic, she might find out.

When she got up there she started scientifically by looking back over her past. She had such odd, awful thoughts that it occurred to her she might be turning into a monster. If so, there must have been signs of it before now—supposing a monster knows its own monstrousness. But when she considered her past she found it painfully meagre.

So she added whole chapters—towering emotional scenes mostly—and relived it with relish. Afterwards she couldn't entirely separate the facts from the fiction. Many a mild soul from her childhood had a glamor and many an innocent act a fishiness which they never lived down.

Sometimes she felt pretty sleepy and she would have liked to be stroked. She would have liked a disembodied hand stroking her hair—gently, the way she stroked a cat, across the top of its head and smoothly down into the curve of its neck.

Sometimes she thought of the future. It seemed a prearranged affair, with everyone allotted a part except herself. She wondered if she would get one or if she'd been overlooked. Perhaps she would have to make do with the attic.

In that case she supposed she would doze off one afternoon and wake up to find she was forty. Rose was rather afraid of that. She dragged out a cheval-glass to keep an eye on herself.

Sometimes she curled down on the window-sill—through the dusty window the light came thick as soup and just as warming—and did not think at all. That was best. In Rose's experience, her experience this summer, once start thinking and it was bound to end badly.

Some of Rose's thoughts were beautiful. They were worth putting in a book for other people to have the benefit. Others—well, she wouldn't be writing those down.

Who would believe the same person could have such beautiful sentiments and such downright ugly ones? Maybe it was something to do with her age. Seven was the mystic number, and in May last she was an exact multiple of it. If double seven was tricky, how was three times seven, how was twenty-one going to be? Really, Rose could not look forward to coming of age.

Sometimes she dressed up. There were things here in the attic—old curtains and bead fringes—which gave a good general effect. She draped them on and posed

in front of the mirror. She was keen to know whether she was going to be beautiful. If she didn't have looks, she would have to have a career. Rose did not fancy a career. She associated it with commercial school and desk-drawer lunches.

She looked searchingly into the glass, tried creeping up on it, tried covering everything but her eyes, made a newspaper fan and tried uncovering everything but her lips.

Her cheeks were a nice pink, so was her nose. Her eyes were large and inclined to blink; she had plenty of strong yellow hair the color and texture of straw.

Her figure was decidedly hippy and she was surprised and chagrined to find that from an upright position her chest now obscured her view of her feet. It looked as if it would be touch-typing for Rose.

"Women brought the words into business," said Rose's father. "It's only fair they should have to cope with them."

Said Rose's mother, "Or you could try semaphore. Imagine an insurance policy spelled out on two flags."

They were inclined to snipe at each other. Yet once, if you could believe it, there was romance between them; she, all blushes and trembles; he, dashing and ardent, bending the knee like an elegant pin. Rose did not believe it.

Her mother had always had marcelled pepper-colored hair, a face pouched like a glove, and open-work strap shoes. Her father had always been red and getting redder; he was obliged to leave the bottom buttons of his waistcoat unfastened; he made the same noise when he drank his soup as when he dozed off in his chair. Rose knew about romance and it was not only absurd, but it was mortifying to try fixing it on her parents.

Up in the attic Rose had plenty to occupy her mind and she could be as awkward as she wanted. She did want to be very awkward—sitting traneced for hours, then snatching at any scrap of stuff which could be draped over or wound round or twisted into. Then she would sail at the mirror from all angles, trying to see the promise of something beyond pothooks.

It was after one of these frenzied searches for beauty that she found the book. That afternoon she had a spot on her chin. She felt leprous and maybe they wouldn't even want her in business. If she was going to have skin trouble they wouldn't care for her to lick the envelopes.

Somewhere in the attic was a short-hand primer. It had a green cover and in happier days was used as the back lawn of her doll's-house. Rose rummaged for it in some old boxes.

She had a vision of looking up from her dictation and seeing a swan-necked, beautiful creature reflected in her employer's eyes. "Dear Sir," she would be writing, and by "Yours faithfully" the Ugly Duckling would be gone.

Her fingers located the spine of a book. It was well down, under a lot of

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As Rose began to read her Aunt Phoebe's diary, her eyes opened wide with astonishment.



By A. L. BARKER



Doctors Prove Palmolive  
can bring YOU...  
*a lovelier complexion*  
in 14 days!



You too CAN LOOK  
FOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS  
IN 14 DAYS

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"This barometer is frequently under the weather — more often down than up—whereas you, Ethel, are always 'Set Fair'."

"But surely you remember that I used to be like your barometer, Jim, more often down than up—nervy, easily tired, and irritable. Now I am as you say, 'Set Fair', and my outlook is 'Fine'."

"Are you going to tell me it is because you are taking Phyllosan?"

"Yes, I'm sure of it. Since I started taking Phyllosan tablets regularly my appetite has improved, my energy has increased, and troubles don't upset me as they used to. Whatever the weather, the sun always shines for me now."

**PHYLLOSAN**

fortifies the over-forties

by restoring digestive and metabolic tone

strengthening the nerves and increasing energy

PM 425-720

He knew he had fallen in love with a woman  
who was a complete mystery to him

# A Flower for Miss Thomas

By H. E. W. GAY

NO one would have guessed what words John Myers, the newly appointed manager of the London and Provinces Bank of the little seaport town of Newick, wished to utter to Miss Thomas each time he entered her shop.

As she stood among her roses and carnations and smiled at him—with strict seller-to-purchaser propriety—he wished to say something that would break the spell of mere pleasant formality that had become so firmly established between them. Something that would set those fine eyes of hers really looking at him.

Tentatively he thought of saying something about dispensing flowers to others and never receiving any herself. But each time he refrained. No matter how he expressed it, it would inevitably sound gauche.

He could even imagine her remarking pleasantly that flowers in lieu of cash would hardly enable her to meet the cheques she was regrettably obliged to draw. And as he left her shop he would remember what, in the six months he had been there, he had learned Newick thought of her.

"June Thomas?"—He recalled a lady pouring tea.—"It's a come-down, of course, selling flowers and sweats turnips. But one has to face facts. I'm sorry for her, but one can't continue indefinitely being too big for one's shoes."

"Our June?"—Men, he noticed, used the possessive—perhaps to make the aloof seem less disturbing to their vanity.

But he refused to accept any such summing-up of her. He felt there was some mystery about her more profound than any hinted at by ladies at tea-parties or gentlemen in clubs. She seemed to him, keeping as she did to the role of a commercially go-ahead woman, to be playing a part.

From the start it puzzled him. But now it did much more. He realised he had fallen in love with a mysterious woman who remained obstinately behind a mask. And the deuce of it was they got on so well together. Miss Thomas, the customer, clearly liked John Myers, the bank manager.

His help and advice were so pleasantly and so tactfully available that, if the directors had asked her what they thought of their experiment of appointing an Englishman to the management of a bank in Wales, she would have complimented them upon it and upon the wisdom of their choice in particular. But the more cordial became their commercial good relations, the farther from him had John Myers put all thoughts of love.

He was wondering half humorously what he would do about it when there was a tap on his office door.

"Miss Thomas to see you, sir."

John Myers rose to greet his customer. He remembered she had recently returned from a conference in London at which the problems and the prospects of the flower trade were to be discussed and he invited her to tell him all about it.

He watched her as she talked, quite

vivaciously, of a world organisation which she was joining, through which florists could deliver flowers to any person, on any occasion, on any day and in any part of the world. The man at the head of it was frightfully keen. He'd been—wasn't it strange?—the leader of an underground resistance movement during the war. She was planning—

But though he knew what she was saying his mind was elsewhere. Behind her words he heard others, coming back from boyhood days, but lit now with a meaning he'd never heard in them before, words spoken in a resonantly beautiful voice reading the lessons in school Chapel. . . . "Her eyes are fine and fifty set" . . .

What preceded them or followed he couldn't remember. All he knew was that he felt moved as he saw those eyes now in the face of the woman who was talking to him of overheads, profit margins, and turnover. He wanted abruptly to challenge her, to stop the other woman from talking. But he could think of no way of telling her.

And so the talk went blithely on. At last, obeying a sudden impulse, he clutched at her reference to the underground resistance leader whose change of occupation she had mentioned as so strange. The reference was off, but not too far off, the commercial track.

"I was thinking," he said suddenly in a pause of the conversation, "of that man you were telling me about. Didn't it strike you not only as strange but rather lovely that hands insured to death should turn to flowers?"

She looked at him swiftly, off her guard for a moment. She seemed suddenly to be deeply hurt, as though he was deliberately making fun of her and betraying the pleasant relationship between them, in which her self respect had seemed secure. He knew it could not have been what he had said that had offended. It was the note that had crept into his voice that had betrayed him.

And then the significance of the changed circumstances of her life, though there was nothing unusual in them that had not happened to thousands of others, came home to him with a flash. Even the fact that her father had been a solicitor who had died just in time to avoid bankruptcy and prosecution was not unprecedented.

Nor her having to relinquish what might have been a brilliant career in order to support herself and her mother when the very furniture under them was being sold to pay creditors.

Such things had happened often and people had survived them. They had only to face facts. But however realistically they might face them, the unpleasantness of the facts remained and could not be stared away.

"And particularly in a small place," as the vicar, who knew his parishioners, had put it, "to see someone unexpectedly coming down in the world is exciting."

"I must ask you to forgive me, Miss Thomas," John Myers said, looking at her attentively, and pretending to have seen nothing. "I should not have interrupted you. You were telling me about



your plan for a heating system for your glasshouse."

He saw the hurt and suspicion slowly disappear from her eyes. She had evidently decided she had been mistaken, that no slight had been intended, after all.

"I'll come round one day soon, if I may, and look over your place," he suggested, safely back on ground that was familiar. "Money's a bit tight, but you can rely on me to do what I can."

She smiled at him as he saw her to the door, and the smile was charming. So were her movements as she turned to go. They set him wondering what career it was that she had given up.

He wondered, too, what could be done about a woman who, having charm enough to take it for granted that a man should wish to make love to her; nevertheless suspected he was making fun of her when he did. Why, having so much to give, was she so determined to keep herself to herself?

When he called he found Miss Thomas out, and he was invited to wait in a sitting-room at the back of the shop. A young girl behind a mass of flowers assured him she would not be long.

The sitting-room struck him as having undergone the same sort of transformation as Miss Thomas. It was subordinated to the business. There was a large desk occupying the best position by the window, and the rest of the furniture had had to give way to it and to a number of boxes that had overflowed from the shop.

In one corner was a bookcase, a gramophone, and some records stowed away under a table. As five minutes went by and Miss Thomas didn't appear, he went over to find out more about that





part of the room that seemed to correspond to the woman in Miss Thomas that had been pushed into the background by the florist.

A glance at the shelves was enough to assure him that Miss Thomas knew good books from bad. Yet he was delighted to observe there were enough good thrillers among them to free her of any suspicion of precious and lopsided superiority.

He passed on—atrociously forgetting where he was—from the books to the gramophone records. They were tidy, far too tidy, he thought, to be frequently played, and the gramophone itself seemed to earn its right to be there as a convenient stand for pots of bulbs. He wondered how long it had been since any of them—ballet music seemed to figure quite prominently—had been played.

Then, just as he was about to go back into the shop and ask if it would not be more convenient for him to call another day, he discovered an album of photographs. As he turned the pages, the recurring background in the snapshots of what house agents would call a "desirable country residence" gave point to the vicar's remarks about people coming down in the world.

He could see how necessary it was for her to find some completely new foundation for her life in this small place where everyone knew her. And it would have to be one on which she could stand on her own merits, asking no favors, cutting herself off completely from all ambitions and relationships that belonged to the life that had disappeared. And having no money, she had to discover such a foundation quickly. She had found it in a florist's shop.

Then, between two pages, his eye fell on something written on the back of a large photograph. It was in a flowing feminine hand—To June Thomas with love from all at the Westminster School of Ballet. He turned it over and, as he saw her, confident, beautiful, her eyes shining, he knew beyond

the shadow of a doubt that the woman behind the florist's mask was not a figment of his imagination.

He was looking at it by the window when he heard Miss Thomas' voice in the shop. There was no time to cross the room and put it back. He had to slip it inside his coat, press it with his arm against his side, and compose his features to assure Miss Thomas that her absence had not involved him in any waste of time.

He was walking with one arm still pressed to his ribs as he returned to his office after Miss Thomas had shown him round her property.

There were some days of delay while the London and Provinces Bank in Newick argued about the value, prospects, and importance of Miss Thomas' shop with the London and Provinces Bank in London. Cheerful facts and gloomy suppositions, confidence and caution, confronted and challenged one another as the typewriters at each end rattled into action.

Three weeks went by and no one yet knew who had won. At last it was decided that a particular Great Man, who had been away during the correspondence campaign, should give his verdict on the day of his return. The day was named and, to save further delay, the decision was going to be telephoned.

Miss Thomas had shown exemplary patience. She did not once ask what was happening, and because of it John Myers told her more than he would have told any other customer. And she obviously appreciated being treated on terms of equality, just like a discreet and reasonable sort of man.

It seemed quite natural therefore that, seeing her in the bank just before the time of closing on the day when the decision was to be made, he should ask her to come into his office and wait.

"Our rustic affairs are not important

*Each time John Myers saw June in her flower shop he wanted to say something to break the spell of formality between them.*

enough to be attended to in the morning," he explained with a smile. "They usually deal with us while they're waiting for a cup of tea. Which reminds me," he added suddenly getting up from his chair, "I don't see why we shouldn't have one, too." And he disappeared through the office door that led to his flat.

It may have been due to some subtle change produced by his little personal attention to her, but when she looked up at him on his return with their cups of tea, it was as though the girl in the photograph was sitting there dressed up in Miss Thomas' clothes.

He found himself suddenly glancing across at the telephone, hoping it wouldn't ring. A wild and irrational desire came to him that the line should be out of order. The spell, the enchantment, would be shattered if that accursed thing went off, and that girl sitting there would vanish.

The idea came into his head very suddenly. The craziness of it counted for nothing against the need for swift action, for catching the auspicious moment before it passed.

Throwing caution to the winds and acting upon impulse, he took the photograph from the drawer of his desk where he had hidden it, plucked a rose from the bowl of flowers he had bought from Miss Thomas' that morning, and, with her eyes still smiling at him, placed photograph and flower on the desk before her.

"I've fallen in love with this lady," he said as casually as he could. "Do you think she might be willing to marry me?"

John Myers had taken off the glasses he wore at the office. They were less necessary for vision, a candid oculist friend had suggested to him, than to enable him to look

a bit more like a bank manager and less like a rather naive young man just down from a university.

His gesture had been unconscious, an impulse to have no more of that relationship which had enabled them to get on so well and yet had so effectively kept them apart. With the glasses off he had thrown down the barriers she had put up and was pleading with her.

"I know, my dear," he said recklessly, for there was no way back now, "I know I can't offer that world"—he glanced at the photograph—"that your eyes are seeing there. I am not fame, or wealth, or the intoxication of applause in a dancer's ears. I am an obscure official of a bank and I can give you nothing."

To his astonishment he saw her lips were trembling. At last she looked up and he saw there were tears in her eyes.

"Nothing?" she said.

He got up from his chair and was round the desk to her. He drew her to her feet, took her in his arms and kissed her once, swiftly, passionately, on the lips. Then he looked at her steadily, holding her at arms'

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# DETECTION UNLIMITED



## Our engrossing new mystery serial By GEORGETTE HEYER

**M**R. THADDEUS DRYBECK, stepping from the neat gravel drive leading from his house on to the road, found his further progress challenged, and, indeed, impeded, by the sudden onrush of several Pekingese dogs, who bounded and barked asthmatically about his feet.

Repressing a desire to sweep them from his path with the tennis racket he was carrying, he used this instead to guard his ankles, for one of Mrs. Midgeholme's Pekes was known to bite.

"Shoo!" said Mr. Drybeck testily. "Get away!"

The Pekes, maddened to frenzy by this form of address, bounced and barked more than ever, and one of them made a dart at Mr. Drybeck's racquet.

"Peekies, Peekies!" trilled a new voice, in loving reproach. "Naughty! Come to mother at once! It's only their play, Mr. Drybeck."

Three of the Pekes, feeling that the possibilities of the situation had been exhausted, abandoned their prey; the fourth, standing four-square before Mr. Drybeck, continued to bark and growl at him until snatched up into the arms of her owner, who dealt her a fond slap, and said: "Isn't she a pet! This is mother's eldest little girl, aren't you, my treasure? Now, say you're sorry to poor Mr. Drybeck!"

Mr. Drybeck, perceiving that the animal was being thrust towards him, recoiled.

"Oh, you've hurt her feelings!" said Mrs. Midgeholme, kissing the top of the Peke's head. "Wouldn't he shake hands with you, Ursula? Never mind!"

The expression in Ursula's indignantly bulging eyes appeared to be one of loathing rather than of hurt; but this reflection Mr. Drybeck kept to himself, merely saying in his precise way: "I fear I am not fond of dogs."

"I'm sure you are really," said Mrs. Midgeholme, unwilling to think ill of a fellow creature. Her eyes, which, from their slight protuberance, bore a resemblance to those of her dogs, ran over him appraisingly. "I expect you're off to the Haswells," she said sapiently. "You're a great tennis player, aren't you?"

Mr. Drybeck disclaimed, but felt the description to be just. In his youth he had spent his every summer holiday competing in

tournaments, and to his frequent success the row of trophies upon the mantelshef in his dining-room bore testimony. His style of play was old-fashioned, like everything else about him, but the young men who considered him a desiccated exponent of pat-ball nevertheless found him a difficult adversary to beat.

He was by profession a solicitor, the last surviving member of a firm long established in the neighboring town of Bellingham. He had never married, but was extremely precise in all his ways and disliked nearly every form of modern progress, a circumstance which possibly accounted for the sadly diminishing numbers of his clients.

The older members of the community among whom he had lived all his life remained faithful to him, but the younger men seemed to prefer the methods employed by his rival and bete noire, Mr. Sampson Warrenby, an upstart of no more than fifteen years' standing in the district.

Sampson Warrenby's rapidly expanding business, at first a small thorn in Mr. Drybeck's flesh, was fast assuming the proportions of a menace; and since the day, just after the war ended, when he had had the bad taste to move his private residence from Bellingham to the hitherto select village of Thornden, it had become impossible for the indignant Mr. Drybeck to continue to be socially unaware of his existence.

He had bought a house in the lane which debouched on to the main Bellingham road at a point almost opposite Mr. Drybeck's small but ancestral home.

"Alas, my tennis days are over!" proclaimed Mrs. Midgeholme. "But you'll meet my Lion."

Mr. Drybeck was unalarmed. Major Midgeholme, who had been given the name of Lionel by optimistic parents, was a shy man of retiring habits, quite cast into the shade by his kind-hearted but somewhat overpowering wife.

"I'll walk with you as far as the corner," pursued Mrs. Midgeholme, tucking Ursula under her arm. "Unless you mean to go by way of the lane?"

The lane, which served the little house rented by Miss Patterdale, at the corner, and—farther down facing the common—Mr. Warrenby's residence, led by way of a stile, to

the footpath which flanked the Haswells' large garden and ran on beside the Squire's eastern plantations to join the northern and secondary road to Bellingham.

There was a gate at the bottom of the Haswells' garden, but although this would certainly have been Mr. Drybeck's shortest route, he would have thought it very improper to have presented himself at the house by way of a private back gate. So he politely fell into step beside Mrs. Midgeholme, and accompanied her down the road to where the main village street intersected it.

Since the Pekes had to be continually admonished, conversation was of a desultory nature. Mr. Drybeck, wincing at his companion's frequent shrieks to Umbrella, Umberto, and Uppish, was forced to remind himself, not for the first time, that Flora Midgeholme was a good-natured and a plucky woman, who bore uncomplainingly the hardships of a straitened income, eked it out by dispensing with the services of a maid and by breeding dogs, and always presented to the world the front of a woman well satisfied with her lot. Only he did wish that she wouldn't call her dogs such absurd names.

But this was unavoidable. On his retirement from the Army, Major Midgeholme had built a bungalow in Thornden, at the end of the village street, where the tarred road ended and a mere cart-track led across the fields to a small farm. Mrs. Midgeholme had conceived the pretty idea of calling the bungalow "Ultima Thule," and when, in course of time, she began to breed Pekes, Ultima had seemed to be the only possible patronymic to bestow upon them.

Ultima Ulysses and Ultima Una, the progenitors of a long and lucrative line, received their alliterative names in a moment of impulsive inspiration. Ursula, Urban, and Urania had followed, and by that time the custom of alliteration had been established, and the supply of proper names was running out. Umberto, Uriah, and Ulrica exhausted it, and succeeding generations of puppies received their names from the pages of a dictionary.

"But, after all," said Mrs. Midgeholme, looking on the bright side, "they are rather quaint, aren't they? And Unready won two firsts and two seconds at Cruft's."

In the intervals of summoning Umberto, Umbrella, and Uppish out of other people's gardens, Mrs. Midgeholme confided to her companion that although she had been invited to the Cedars to watch the tennis, and to take tea, she had been obliged to refuse. "For I don't mind telling you, Mr. Drybeck, that I doubt if I could trust myself."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Drybeck, startled.

"Not," said Mrs. Midgeholme, her eye kindling, "if I am expected to speak to Mr. Warrenby. And if he's there, which of course he will be, nothing would stop me giving him a piece of my mind! So I'm not going."

"I am exceedingly sorry. I was unaware that there was any—ah—estrangement between you and Warrenby."

"No, well, it only happened yesterday. Not but what I never have liked the man, and between you and me and the gatepost, his behaviour to Lion during the war, when Lion was absolutely running the Home Guard, finished him for me! But that he could be cruel to dumb animals I did not suspect."

"Dear, dear!" said Mr. Drybeck. "One of your dogs?"

"Ulysses!" said Mrs. Midgeholme. "Ulysses! I popped in to speak to that unfortunate niece of Mr. Warrenby's about the Conservative Whist Drive, and took the dear old fellow with me. That brutal man kicked him!"

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Drybeck. "You don't mean it?"

"I do mean it. He actually boasted of it! Had the effrontery to tell me, when I demanded to know why my angel had yelped and come limping into the house, that he had kicked him off one of the flower-beds. I fairly exploded!"

Mr. Drybeck could believe it. The mere recollection of the outrage caused Mrs. Midgeholme's ample bosom to swell and her rather florid complexion to assume an alarmingly high color. He made soothing noises.

"I should have said a great deal more than

To page 35





The Squire turned from his hostess to stare at Gavin. "No need to have rushed straight off for those papers," he said.

Illustrated by

Frank Beck



It was the moment in Sally's life when  
she needed to share a little sadness

# Weep with me

**B**Y the time he had turned the corner, leaving the bright Californian sunshine for the shadow of the buildings, Paul was only a few steps behind the girl in the chartreuse suit. He quickened his pace to catch up with her.

"Don't scream," he said out of the corner of his mouth. "Just turn into this supermarket." She glanced at him and then, without speaking, went through the door he held open. "Have you got the papers?" he muttered as she passed him.

The girl turned and faced him. She brushed back her heavy blonde hair. "Some bad guy," she said. "You haven't even got a trench coat." She reached into her bag and took out a piece of paper. "Here," she said, handing it to him.

Paul looked up and down the store, and then tore the paper in two and handed her back one piece of it. "I'll meet you back here in ten minutes. Don't let on you know me."

"Don't worry, I won't," she said in a tired voice.

They met at the counter where the parcels were paid for and wrapped. Paul picked up hers as well as his own, and they went out together.

"Apples," he said, nodding at one of the bags. "Real fond of apples." The girl walked in silence beside him.

"Did anyone ever tell you that you are a pretty girl, Sally?" he said, leaning over the top of the bag between them.

"Frequently," she said dully.

He stopped. "Frequently? What kind of an answer is that? You can do better than that."

"Not tonight, Paul," Sally said wearily. "I'm too tired to play foolish games."

Paul threw back his head. "Foolish games, is it? Now that you're a big movie actress your husband isn't good enough for you, eh?"

"Please, Paul," she pleaded. "I've had a rotten day. All I want is to get home and lie down."

"I'll cheer you up, then," he said brightly. "Funny thing happened to me at the studio today. A little old woman came in and said she wanted to speak to one of the writers, and they sent her down to see me."

With Sally leading the way, they went through the main door of a small apartment house and down a dim hall.

"Well, sir, she was as crazy as a tree full of birds, the poor old thing," said Paul, hurrying to keep up with Sally.

"When she came into my office I asked her for her name, and she said, 'Oh, I can't tell you my name. Not my real name. They might find out. Call me seven-eight-four.'"

Paul put the bags down on the small table in the middle of the living-room, and Sally pushed the single window up high, wrinkling her nose with distaste at the stuffiness of the room.

"Said she had a wonderful story she wanted us to have. She said she could prove Stalin was really a woman."

Paul paused and watched Sally

"Listen," Paul said softly, "Sally, if you want to feel really unhappy, listen to this."

kick off her shoes, strip off her jacket, and sink face down on the day-bed against the wall.

He straightened his shoulders. "Well, that was too much for me, so, inching my chair up a little closer, I said, 'Seven—if I may call you by your first name—tell me . . .'"

Paul walked quickly over to the couch. Sally's head was buried deep in a pillow and her bright hair spilled over it. "What's wrong, pal?" he asked.

Sally rolled over and looked at him accusingly. "Paul, if you knew anything at all about women you would know there are times when being silly is no help at all."

He looked at her carefully. "You mean—?"

"I mean I didn't get that part in the picture today. I'm sorry if I'm a poor loser, but I feel rotten about it and I want to act the way I feel. This isn't a burlesque of a movie script, either. This is real. This is us. So let's have a little respectful sadness around the place, if you don't mind." She turned her face into the pillow.

Paul ran a hand through his close-cropped hair. "Yeah," he said softly.

He watched her for a moment. A little sadness? Sure, he could provide that, too. In fact, maybe that was just what Sally needed to cheer her up.

Paul nodded his head slowly. "Listen," he said softly, "listen, Sally." She stirred. "If you want to feel really unhappy, listen to this, Sally."

"Whuff tha?" she asked from the depths of the pillow.

"I'm out of work. Through at the studio come Saturday. What do you think of that?" he said. He looked almost pleased with himself as he sat down on a chair next to the couch.

Sally sat up slowly. "No, Paul, you're not?"

He bobbed his head. Sally was at his side, her arms around his head. "Oh, darling, what a rotten break for you."

"But why am I telling you all this?" he asked, shrugging. "A girl I picked up on the street, and here I am telling you all my hopes, my dreams."

"Paul, you mustn't feel too bad." She ran a hand over his hair. "Oh, darling, and after they brought you all the way out here."

"Well," Paul said lightly, "you can't win them all. Why are you looking at me like that?"

Sally continued to look at him steadily. "You knew," she said with emphasis. "You knew all the time I had missed that part. You were trying to cheer me up, and I was so mean. Oh, Paul."

Her arms were around his neck. Paul raised his head. "I heard about it this afternoon at our studio. Bailey's going to get the part. The fix is in. Cornell herself couldn't get it with a letter of recommendation from the Theatre Guild. You didn't have a chance, baby."

"I don't care," said Sally. "What's a part? There'll be lots of other jobs. For both of us."

He pulled her down on his knees

and kissed her. She smiled bravely at him.

"I'll get some dinner and then we'll go down to our neighborhood movie house and boo Bailey," she said. She got up from his lap and walked with brisk purpose to the kitchen.

Paul leaned back and hooked his thumbs into his belt and watched his wife as she walked to the kitchen, her head held high. She was undoubtedly a very pretty girl. She was also a girl with a good spirit, something not all girls with nice legs had.

Paul sighed deeply and reached for the bag with the apples. He took one and brushed it once against his jacket and bit deeply. Out in the kitchen Sally was humming a nameless little song. He was a very fortunate man.

For instance, it had been sheer luck—and an inspiration—that he'd thought to tell Sally about losing his job, because she was right. He didn't know much about women. But he was learning. After all, he couldn't be expected to know all there was in three weeks of married life.

He took another bite of the apple. But a few more master strokes like this, and he could be regarded as better than a green hand. All Sally had needed to lift her out of her disappointment was to know that he needed her. Now she felt almost happy again.

And tomorrow would be soon enough to tell her that the reason he was through at his studio was that he was going to a better job. That would make her really happy.

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BY JOHN CLARE

ILLUSTRATED BY F. LANSDOWN



## On this Royal Occasion..

With Royal pomp and splendour — here for the first time,  
in the new plume bottle and carton, these new Royal shades  
direct from the Paris Salon of Peggy Sage



### Peggy Sage

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YOUTH SERIES by Kay Melaun

## Are you prejudiced?

The closing of the mind is like the hardening of the arteries—and the two processes are usually concurrent.

By the age of 30 most people's minds are on the way to being shut, with the doors marked "prejudice."

IN only rare instances do you find people who, as they get older, open their minds to admit new ideas.

A closed mind is understandable in everybody. But it's more pardonable in older people.

One has to strain, however, to make allowances for a closed mind in the young.

Why have a closed mind?

Why say, for instance, that you don't like golf or wieners schnitzel or murder stories or square dancing if you've never tried them?

YOU don't like ballet, you claim, although your girl-friend does. But have you ever seen a performance? By that I don't mean just sitting it through, enduring it, and letting her know you were making a martyr of yourself.

You have, and you still don't like it?

All right. But if you've really given it a fair viewing, at least you'll know something of what ballet's about.

You'll have more of an opinion on the subject than a dismissing: "Oh, all that hopping about." You should at least be able to say why you don't like it.

The only way you can find out why you don't like it is to follow it intelligently—to "give it a go," as they say.

AS for the girls. You can't hear all these science-space stories and movies. Have you ever given them an intelligent reception?

Have you really listened while your boy-friend expatiated on the mysteries of inter-stellar space?

If you do you might discover why he gets such a thrill out of the space operas even if you still don't share his enthusiasm.

Science-space won't oust Christian Dior's latest in your priority list of fascinating topics. It mightn't have what you could call cozy charm, but it can be interesting.

Next time the subject comes up with a group of boys you won't sit there bored and dumb if you've any knowledge of what they're talking about.

Why resist knowing something about a subject? Why take the attitude: "I don't know, and I don't want to know"? That way you miss a lot.

### A bachelor's opinion:

#### HOW TO BEST A WOLF

WOLVES are like other creatures of night's shadows—moths. Both are attracted by bright lights.

So, if you don't consider wolves highly desirable company, don't invite their attentions by dressing loudly, using technicolor make-up, and frequenting low night spots.

The wolf is a complex neurotic fellow whose peculiar little ego needs constant "shots in the arm" to save it from collapsing altogether. Therefore he needs numbers of easy victories or he feels that his life's vital purpose is not being achieved.

In dealing with him make uninhibited use of the "cold-shoulder."

If he resorts to force you, too, must take forceful action.

A good swift kick in the shins is a superior way of declining his offers. If laughing in his face has no effect, then slap it.

The performance and workings of planes and cars aren't usually compatible with the sugar and spice and everything nice that little girls are reputedly made of.

If six feet of brawn and muscle with a sports shirt and scarf is attached, that's a different matter. But there's scarcely a girl who can be absorbed by talk of cylinders and jet propulsion.

Still, it doesn't hurt to know a bit about it. No one is ask-

ing you to be an expert; for sure, no boy will want you to compete with him.

You might remember, though, that just as boys are irritatingly dumb on the subject of women's fashions, so girls can be maddeningly stupid about mechanics.

YOU don't like foreigners.

They've got such accents, you say, their clothes are "dreadful," and they've got some "queer" ideas.

Chances are that these opinions of yours are the result of observing some of the rowdies in the street, whereas you've never exchanged more than half-a-dozen sentences with foreigners.

This means that you've no first-hand experience from which you can make your own judgment.

It means putting your nose in the air and saying, "It's new, it's strange, it's different, therefore I don't like it."

THERE'LL be few people who don't like music in some of its forms. It's only a pity that the fans tend to divide like the Red Sea into pro-jazz and pro-classic groups and never the twain shall meet.

Jazz is fun, and clever fun at that. Good music can be the most wonderful thing in the world.

If you're a highbrow, give the lowbrow brand a chance.

If you're a lowbrow, open your ears to some classical music once in a while.

You can't learn too much. If you flatter yourself that you know all music you might be like the little boy in the joke whose father was so proud of his musical knowledge. Whatever record Pop picked up, little Johnny knew what was on the other side.

### DISC DIGEST

discs. A word of praise must also go to the notes, which are so well written that you can follow every new line of action in the dramatic plot.

THE stars were shining brightly in 1938, and no tenor star was more brilliant than Beniamino Gigli, who sings Cavaradossi. This is Gigli at his best, and it is a wonderful experience to sit back, without interruptions, and be laved luxuriously by the golden flood of his glorious voice. If you've enjoyed this "Tosca" on 78s, you have only an inkling of the added richness and depth micro-groove has given it. Maria Caniglia as Floria Tosca has been accused of melodramatics. But, after all, she's sup-

posed to be a famous singer who sees her lover tortured, stabs her would-be seducer, and then has to stand by while her man is killed by trickery. You'd hardly expect her to behave like a church mouse. Caniglia's voice both chills and thrills.

ONE needs to hear a Puccini opera like this on LP to appreciate his terrific power of underlining the action with dramatic flourishes. He did with ease in 1900 what film-score writers are still trying to achieve in 1954. The Rome Opera House Chorus and Orchestra under Oliviero de Fabritiis are exceptionally good. "Tosca" as you know, is set in Rome, and somehow the fact that the opera was recorded there seems to give it a rare sense of authenticity.

—BERNARD FLETCHER.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — February 3, 1954



# It's all work for the Royal staff



ROYAL PARTY on their way to attend divine service during the tour of New Zealand. At rear of the line are Lieut.-Commander Michael Parker (left), Lady Pamela Mountbatten, and Lieut. J. P. D. Hall, all members of the Queen's personal staff.

## Touring household serves the Queen, seeks no limelight

By ANNE MATHESON, our Royal tour correspondent

The members of the Queen's Household—her ladies-in-waiting, her private secretaries and equerries—are easily the hardest working people on the Royal tour.

Late to bed and early to rise is their routine. Long days spent in attendance on the Queen and planning in advance the last-minute details of the tour give them little or no time at all for private parties or personal expeditions.

THEY are on tour to serve their Queen, and are watchful that the Royal couple shall have all possible help in carrying out the long and sometimes exacting programme.

One rarely sees photographs of members of the Royal Household in newspapers.

Sometimes it is hard to recognise the equerries, who seem to be particularly skilful in avoiding the cameras.

I have never seen a photograph of the Queen with a member of her household in too prominent a position.

They believe the people come to see the Queen, and that they, the members of the household, simply do not count.

They avoid all publicity and will never pose for photographs separately.

People are often surprised to hear that the unassuming-looking men in attendance on the Queen are her closest confidants and advisers.

Lady Alice Egerton, one of the ladies-in-waiting, who was ill during the first part of the Queen's visit to New Zealand, found that indisposition at least allowed her time to do some shopping.

"Only when I was convalescing could I find time to buy some cotton frocks," she said.

Christmas in bed, surrounded by luggage in a small room at the hotel opposite

Government House, Auckland, where the Queen and the Duke were staying, might have been grim for Lady Alice if it were not for her wonderful sense of fun.

Known as "The Egerton" in the Royal Household circle and loved by everyone for her easy charm and buoyancy, she propped herself up with a detective story.

Beside her lay piles of Royal tour schedules and descriptive folders on all the wonders of New Zealand she was likely to miss if she didn't get better.

Lady Alice was often lonely during her illness.

It meant that Lady Pamela Mountbatten had to do double duty. There was so little time between Royal functions that Lady Pamela could pay the Lady Alice very few visits.

Lady Pamela is the most sought-after member of the Royal Household. Wherever she goes there is some friend of her father, the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, or her mother waiting to meet her.

### Chief's welcome

AT the meeting house of King Koronaki Lady Pamela had a particularly warm welcome from one of the high chiefs—the one who had once escorted her father round the meeting house. He was delighted to show Lady Pamela all her father had seen.

Lady Pamela keeps her sister, Lady Brabourne, and her friends supplied with Royal tour stamps. This means a lot

of organisation on a tour running to such perfect timing. It is hard to find a post office open.

Late at night and early in the morning are her only moments for writing personal letters.

The Queen's correspondence has to be answered and many of the social problems that casually arise have to be smoothed over.

The most constant inquiry is, "What does the Queen like to eat and how many lumps of sugar does she take, and does she prefer tea to coffee?"

All the little intimate inquiries from anxious hostesses or organisers came to Lady Pamela during the illness of Lady Alice.

Inevitably she felt the strain, but she proved herself a real Mountbatten and rose to the test wonderfully.

Being a member of the Royal Household is not all streamlined entrances and exits behind the Royal couple.

Often enthusiastic crowds surge around the Queen's car, cutting off the entourage cars.

I have seen Lady Pamela and Lieut.-Commander Michael Parker, the Duke's secretary, scrambling about in hedges and flower gardens trying desperately to fight their way through the cheering, surging crowds to join the Queen and the Duke.

It was a particularly wild scramble at Panama City when they were cut off by the crowds outside the British Ambassador's residence.



LIEUTENANT HALL takes a snap of Maori children diving for coins. Standing next to him are Sir Michael Adeane, the Queen's private secretary, and Lady Pamela Mountbatten. Members of the Queen's staff are camera-shy and do their best to avoid publicity.

Lady Pamela was clinging to her cocktail hat, which was knocked sideways, and pushing back the rose bushes with her gloved hands. Her pretty cocktail dress was crushed by the Panamanians and West Indians rushing forward to catch a last glimpse of the Queen.

Only by force did she reach the Queen and the Duke.

But all this lady-in-waiting takes in good part.

That day was a particularly boisterous one for Lady Pamela.

In the morning's chaotic procession, she jumped in and out of her car several times to help prevent children from falling under the wheels.

Before the entourage arrived at the canal lock gates, Lady Pamela's pale green taffeta dress, one of the loveliest of her Worth models, was well splattered with axle grease, and a quick hitch was needed to straighten out the hemlines and stiffened petticoats.

Every member of the Royal Household now has a camera—that is everyone but Lieut.-Colonel the Honorable Martin Charteris, who is assistant private secretary to the Queen.

"Can't seem to get the hang of it," says Martin Charteris. But the rest of the Royal Household are, like the Queen, making as many movies and snapshots as they possibly can. Michael Parker, when seated

on the dais at the pleasant informal functions that have made the New Zealand tour so interesting and enjoyable, has usually been operating the Queen's movie camera.

At other times he is taking pictures for himself.

The Queen is anxious to have as full a pictorial record of her tour as possible, and when Michael Parker is not on duty the Duke's detective, Frank Kelly, does the film shooting.

Kelly took all the ceremonial dances at Suva for the Queen, standing next to the Press photographers, who had been in some awe of the detective until they found he was just as keen as they were to get good pictures.

### Grass skirt dance

PERHAPS the most amusing experience three members of the Queen's Household had was at Tonga when the Tongan ladies, who were dancing on the green as the Queen and the Duke passed, rushed the Queen's private secretary, Sir Michael Adeane, Lieut.-Colonel Charteris, and one of the equerries on to the grass to dance.

All were in grass skirts and leis, presents from Queen Salote.

The Tongan dancing girls whirled the visitors away in a wild Tongan dance. There was nothing they could do but join in the fun.

It might have offended the courteous and generous Tongans to have refused and shouts of delight went out as the Royal Household pranced about in a series of new steps they were being put through.

Some of the Royal Household's experiences are not nearly so amusing.

Press secretary Commander Richard Colville had a very worrying time when he hurt his ear swimming and could not fly to Tonga.

He told a few of the reporters who were flying in advance of the Queen he would have to miss the early receptions because he was going by Gothic, having been told not to fly.

The news—not intended for publication—was flashed to London.

It was exaggerated, and when one newspaper phoned Commander Colville's wife she was told her husband was being taken off the tour and flown home with a punctured eardrum.

Urgent cables from his distressed family reached Richard as he was settling down to enjoy the cruise from Suva to Tonga, having reconciled himself to missing the flight and the first day's feasting.

When Lady Alice Egerton was taken ill it was Commander Colville who made the announcement—for publication—but not until her family in England had been fully informed of her illness.



# White at Nightfall

● White has new beauty for autumn evenings; here the choice lies between misty drifts of chiffon and gleaming satin.



**SLENDER**, petal-skirted chiffon dress (above) has covered shoulders in the new evening manner. The bodice and V-line décolletage are beautifully draped to the wearer's figure.



**MODEL** (above) has a bertha of rose-pink silk taffeta folded over a strapless bodice and matched to a graceful flower-trimmed skirt bow on the bouffant skirt. White elbow-length skin gloves complete an elegant ensemble.



**FLOWING** Empire lines are seen in the classic ball gown (right). Bands of black velvet ribbon cover the shoulder, twist under the bosom, and circle the narrow waistline.



**FORMAL** evening dress with a pretty fashion formula—a pink rose and black velvet on white satin. The gown has a form-moulding bodice-top with the extra coverage so smart for full evening this autumn. The straight-in-front skirtline spreads out to a slight train at the back.



Harry Anderson Paris Notes

on the Novelty skin.

● The straw skirt in many guises makes fresh fashion news. The straw, often fine raffia, can be knitted or crocheted, or can be bought as braid by the yard. Ribbon, similarly treated, can also be used for trimming.

● Ribbon, tied with coquettish bows, is appliqued to the plain linen skirt (above). The same trimming could be done in braid.

● Embroidered scroll effect (above) is achieved by sewing bands of narrow velvet ribbon or straw braid to a wide net overskirt.

Straw stick.

● Straw braid by the yard is sewn in tiers to make the skirt, at right. Each tier is increased in width till the required silhouette is achieved. The finished skirt is worn over a matched or contrasting skirt with a form-fitting sweater top. An enlarged section of the straw is sketched to illustrate how the braid is sewn together. A practical idea is to attach the skirt to an elastic belt.

*Dorothea Johnston*





**WALKING DOWN THE AISLE.** Peter Flint and his bride, formerly Ailsa Gagen, after their wedding at the Presbyterian Church, Wavell Heights. Ailsa is daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. Gagen, of Wavell Heights, formerly of Mundubbera.



**PARTY HOST.** John Gardiner (left), president of the Queensland Pharmaceutical Students' Society, chatting with Patricia Gent, Priscilla Morgan-Paylor, and Lex McArthur, both of Melbourne, when he received the guests at the dance held at Mount Coot-tha to conclude the society's annual congress.



**OFF TO ENGLAND.** Mrs. M. J. Allen and her daughter, Alicia, of "Dunrobin," Goondivindi, and Toowoomba, wave goodbye from the Himalaya, on which they sailed from Sydney, where they stayed with Mrs. Austin Wilson, the former Muffie Allen.

## SOCIAL JOTTINGS

**A FORK** dinner will be given by the Queensland Lawn Tennis Association at Milton Tennis Club on February 6 to welcome to Brisbane the South African tennis players.

The visitors will play their first Test match in Australia on February 5 and 6.

Many tennis enthusiasts in Brisbane to see the Test will be among the guests received at the dinner by the Q.L.T.A. president, Mr. C. A. Edwards, and Mrs. Edwards.

**"CORFIELD,"** via Winton, will be the home of Pam Knowles after her marriage to Robert Marsh, at St. Augustine's, Hamilton, on February 23. Pam, who is the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. V. Knowles, of Ascot, has chosen white nylon for her wedding gown, and her matron of honor, Mrs. Mosa Sudholz, and bridesmaid, Beth Allpass, will both wear pastel blue nylon. The best man will be Howard Douglas, of "Risdon," Warwick. Robert is the only son of Mr. and Mrs. I. G. Marsh, of Mitchell. Among pre-wedding parties arranged will be a cocktail party given by Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Tynan, of Ascot.



**HOME AT LONGREACH** is planned by David Waddell and his bride, formerly Sue Comport, of Longreach. With them at the reception at 29 Murray Street after their wedding at All Saints', Wickham Terrace, were the bridegroom's sister Margaret and his brother Tom, who were bridesmaid and best man. Sue is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Comport.



**FORMER QUEENSLANDER** Mrs. Ted Smout (right), of Sydney, pictured with her hostess, Mrs. W. H. Lambert, at an evening reception given at Rowe's by Mr. and Mrs. Lambert during Mr. and Mrs. Smout's recent visit to Brisbane.



**WEDDING** of North Queensland interest was that of Sydney Hegarty, of Townsville, and his bride, formerly Pearl Heseltine, of Gympie. Pictured with them are bridesmaid Coral Cummings and best man, the bride's brother William, cycling champion at the British Empire Games in New Zealand.



**PRODUCER** Igor Wollner and committee member Norma Coles discuss plans for the open-air concerts which the National Opera Company will give in the Botanical Gardens shell on March 12 and 13. Mr. J. A. Turner is the president of the committee.



**PRESIDENT** Dawn Oakes (left) and secretary Patricia Kidd, of the Playground and Recreation Association Younger Set, which will give a dance on March 16 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Jones for officers of the Canadian cruiser Ontario.

**AFTER** spending several weeks at her summer cottage at Wellington Point, Mrs. John Park will return to her home at Hamilton this month.

**LOVELY** diamond solitaire ring is being worn by Erica Earnshaw, just engaged to Dr. Reg Busch. Erica, who is the second daughter of Mrs. Erica Earnshaw, of Clayfield, and the late Mr. E. Earnshaw, has decided on an early September wedding, which will take place in St. Paul's Presbyterian Church.

**COUNTRY** folk who have changed their address recently are Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Maiden, formerly of "Tullawalla," Roma, who have bought a new property, Bellevue, about fifty miles from Roma. They spent part of the school holidays at Caloundra.

**WITH** her infant son, Michael Anders, Mrs. Peter Holloway will leave Sydney in the Strathmore on March 26 to join her husband Lieutenant Peter Holloway, who arrived in England recently to take a course at the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth. He is on exchange to the Royal Navy for two years. Mrs. Holloway's mother, Mrs. T. K. Paulsen, will accompany her to Sydney, and after farewelling her will stay with her sister, Miss V. Hein, at Mosman, and will later visit Canberra, where she will be the guest of Peter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. Holloway.

**ON** a trip abroad is Mrs. M. Ponsford, of Southport. She will be away for several months.

**LOTS** of entertainment, including barbecues, concerts, surfing, square dancing, and a revue, will be enjoyed by university students who will come from all parts of Australia to attend the annual congress of the National Union of Australian University Students. The congress will be held at the Presbyterian Youth Hostel at Alexander Headlands from February 1 to 10. Up from Melbourne will be the general secretary for Australia, Ethne D'Arcy-Evans, who hails from Western Australia.

**WEDDING** of interest to all circles will be that of Miss Agnes Barker and Mr. Harold Richardson, a former secretary of the Royal Queensland Art Society. The wedding will take place at the Norman Park Church of England, at 4.30 on February 6, and will be followed by a cocktail party at the bride's family home, "Bronte," Norman Park. Miss Caroline Barker will be bridesmaid, and Mr. Alec McFarlane best man.

**FEBRUARY** will be spent on the South Coast by Dr. and Mrs. Keith Shaw, who have taken a house at Surfers' Paradise. Mrs. Shaw's mother, Mrs. Heather Chandler, who has been visiting them at Kingaroy, returned to town with them.

**AFTER** two and a half years in England, Dr. and Mrs. K. J. Watson, formerly of Dalby, will arrive in Sydney by the Otranto on January 30, and will come to Brisbane by train. The Watsons, who have three small daughters, will stay for the time being with Dr. Watson's brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Fred McCracken, of Brighton.

**TO** celebrate the 142nd anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens, the Dickens Fellowship will deck its clubrooms in party dress on February 5, when members will be "at home" to friends. Guests will be received by the president, Mr. F. T. Cross, assisted by the social convenor, Miss I. Murray, and the honorary secretary, Mrs. Charles Young.

Sara



# Royal tour's Director-General at home

**LIEUT.-GENERAL F. H. BERRYMAN**, General Officer Commanding, Eastern Command, who is Director-General of the Royal tour, is supervising arrangements for the Queen's visit to Australia this year. He will retire from the Army on his 60th birthday next April. Lieut.-General and Mrs. Berryman live in an old colonial cottage in the grounds of Victoria Barracks, Sydney.



**ARMY CHIEF.** Lieut.-General F. H. Berryman, General Officer Commanding, Eastern Command, and Mrs. Berryman photographed at their home at Victoria Barracks, Sydney. Lieut.-General Berryman is Director-General of the Royal tour.



**ABOVE:** An exterior view of Lieut.-General and Mrs. Berryman's residence at Victoria Barracks, Sydney. Convict labor built the colonial cottage.

**RIGHT:** Mrs. Berryman seated in the living-room. Flowers used to decorate the room are grown in the lovely garden that surrounds the cottage.



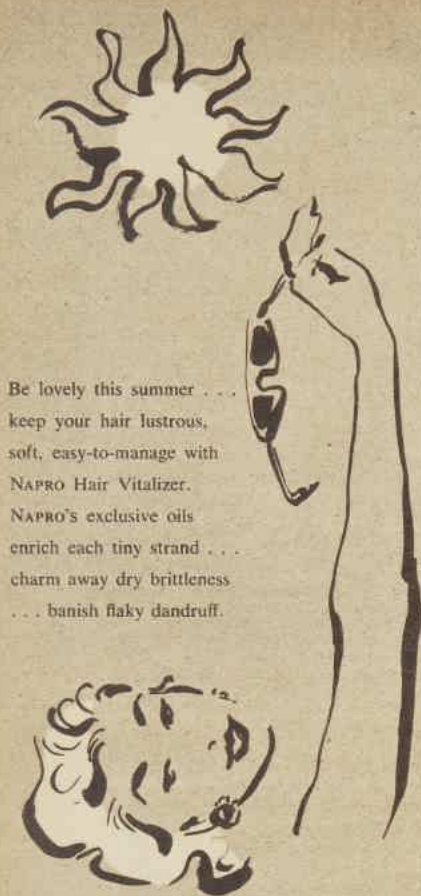
**THE DINING-ROOM.** Simplicity is the theme of the furnishing scheme in the colonial cottage. Mrs. Berryman is a charming hostess and is noted for her small dinner parties at home. Many distinguished guests have dined here. Photographs by staff photographer Clive Thompson.



**THE GENERAL IN HIS STUDY.** General Berryman spends many hours at work in his book-lined study. Trophies of Army days, mementos, and photographs of friends from many parts of the world give the room a pleasantly informal appearance. The General is a popular host.







Be lovely this summer . . .  
keep your hair lustrous,  
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NAPRO Hair Vitalizer.  
NAPRO's exclusive oils  
enrich each tiny strand . . .  
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. . . banish flaky dandruff.

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**TEST PILOT**

By NEVILLE DUKE

The great jet ace has written his life story, from a boyhood absorbed  
in aerial affairs to his present eminent status as one of the world's  
most famous fliers.

PRICE 15/6

FROM ALL BOOKSELLERS

Page 16

## £1000 PRIZE WINNER



**£1000 PRIZE-WINNER.** Mrs. Joy Storey with her husband Leslie and children Graham (7), Helen (2) and Robyn (8), outside their home at 9B Juliett Street, Marrickville, N.S.W. Mrs. Storey's winning entry is published below.

### ABC of Happy Marriage

*Best advice to a married couple from anybody*

**ALWAYS.** No refunds if not satisfied, so choose carefully.  
**BOREDOM.** The arch-enemy of marriage. Root it out at the first signs of growth.  
**CHILDREN.** Marriage was instituted for protection and procreation.  
**DOMESTIC DUTIES.** The most important work in the whole community.  
**EXERCISE.** Physical—to keep you trim. Mental to keep you interesting.  
**FOOD.** Be imaginative, original, and appreciative.  
**GOSSIP.** Don't gossip about your partner's failings.  
**HONESTY.** Be honest with each other, but not brutal.  
**INTELLIGENCE.** Allied with commonsense, it solves many problems.  
**JOB.** A helping hand or listening ear when necessary.  
**KINDNESS.** Be kind to each other.  
**LOVE.** To marry for less is to invite disaster.  
**MODESTY.** Something you can't afford to lose.  
**NAGGING.** Never accomplishes anything. Try encouragement instead.

**OTHERS.** To live in a cocoon of self-centredness is not wise.  
**PRIDE.** Something you can't afford to lose.  
**QUARRELS.** Always apologise first, even if you are right.  
**RELIGION.** The tie that binds, the anchor that holds.  
**SEX.** Sexual compatibility is essential to a happy union.  
**TROUBLE.** Meet it together with courage and loyalty.  
**UNDERSTANDING.** When grounded in love it is never abused.  
**VINDICTIVE.** Check it by a check-up on your physical relationship.  
**WEDDING DAY.** A beautiful memory, but only the beginning.  
**XTRAVAGANCE.** Stimulating occasionally, but must not become a habit.  
**YOU.** Retain your personality. Refuse to become just Mum or Dad.  
**Zzzzz.** Unfortunately, there is no known cure for snoring.

### WINNER LIVES BY OWN RULES

Mrs. Joy Storey, winner of £1000 first prize in our contest, and her husband, Leslie, have been married for ten years. Today their marriage is entirely bound up in their love for one another, their family, and their church.

**THEY** and their three children, Robyn (8), Graham (7), and Helen Joy (2), live in a semi-detached house in Marrickville, N.S.W.

It is a modest house. In front there is a tiny square of grass edged with flowers and enclosed by spiked wrought-iron railings.

Mr. Storey is a mail officer at the Sydney G.P.O.

Robyn and Graham, both redheads, take after their mother, whose hair, cut short

and curly, has darkened to deep chestnut.

Helen Joy, blue-eyed and fair-haired, is very like her father.

"I've another baby on the way, too," said Mrs. Storey.

Mr. and Mrs. Storey first met at church during an open-air meeting.

Joy, vivacious and talkative, and Leslie, quieter and more serious, were instantly attracted. Their engagement lasted nine months, and when Joy was 19 and Leslie 27 they were married.

Both belong to the Baptist

faith, and church activities provide a full and active week not only for them but for their children.

"On Sunday we all go to church—of course," said Mrs. Storey. "Leslie plays the piano for Sunday school. Then on Tuesday night there is the Girls' Brigade. Robyn is a cadet. On Wednesday my husband and I go to Christian Endeavor and prayer meeting. The two elder children are Junior Endeavorers."

"On Saturday nights we go to church socials."

A good conversationalist with a fine sense of humor, Mrs. Storey, formerly a stenographer, typed her entry.

"We are happily married," she stressed. "We are the right people for one another."

"I'm not glamorous, Leslie isn't very tall, and he wears glasses. Yet, since we were

first engaged we have shared so much and have always spoken frankly to one another on all subjects."

"Right at the beginning we found that we shared not only our love for each other, but the love of God. I don't think that a marriage can be happy without it."

"Sometimes I feel sorry for young couples who miss what we have. I hate to hear a wife speaking of her husband with a contemptuous 'Mum'."

"You know, when couples are engaged there is nothing but happiness. Only afterwards does the bitterness arise when physical and spiritual harmony are missing."

The Storeys, in their opinion, are lucky. They may not have much money or a grand home, but they have found—and they deserve—what many others seek: The ABC of a happy marriage.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—February 3, 1954



# Our Happy Marriage Contest

## FULL LIST OF AWARDS

We are delighted to announce the results of our widely popular Happy Marriage Contest. First prize of £1000 for best entry in the contest is awarded to:

Mrs. Joy Storey, 98 Juliett St., Marrickville, N.S.W.

Mrs. Storey's entry, which came under section 1 of the contest, is published on the opposite page.

Several special awards of £5 each have been made for wedding photographs.

The complete list of the other big prizewinners is published at right.

The four sections of the contest were:

1. Best advice to a married couple from anybody.
2. Best advice to husbands from a wife.
3. Best advice to wives from a husband.
4. Most charming wedding picture.

### £250. SECTION 2

Best advice to husbands from a wife.



£250 PRIZE-WINNER in Section 2 of our contest is Mrs. Jean Jones of Normanhurst, N.S.W. She is seen here with her daughter Helen (20), and sons Adrian (4) and six-month-old Garry. Mr. Harold Jones and their eldest son Alan (21) were not at home when the photograph was taken.

**WOMAN** has one great fundamental need—that of love and affection. If this is supplied, she is a happy woman. If she meets with frustration here, no matter what else is given her the result is nagging, criticism, general disharmony.

A husband who will consistently make an effort to keep his wife wrapped in the warmth of his affection will be richly rewarded by a happy home atmosphere.

Of course, his wife assumes that he still loves her, but by telling her so—frequently—he gives her a feeling of security and contentment which will cure any tendency on her part to find fault. His affection can also be expressed by lending a helping hand with the housework when necessary, especially when the children are young.

Woman is not naturally the complex creature so often described. Only when starved of affection does she become so. With this urge satisfied, she is the most easily managed creature imaginable.

If her husband tells her—with a hug—that she looks lovely in last season's clothes, she will cheerfully wear them threadbare. (Often she buys expensive new clothes in the hope of gaining a compliment.)

If he praises her cooking, she will exert all her skill to prepare delicious meals for him. Nothing is too much trouble for her if he appreciates her efforts.

Any husband can easily transform a "problem" wife into a happy, contented one by the application of this rule.

### PRIZE LIST

#### Section 1

£250. Mrs. RAIMONDE F. BRADY, 48 Wills St., Kew E4, Vic.

£50. Mrs. MARGUERITE SMITH, 122 High St., Inverell, N.S.W.

£25. Mrs. L. L. NEWTON, 79 Knight St., Shepparton, Vic.

#### Section 2

£250. Mrs. H. JONES, 24 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Normanhurst, N.S.W.

£50. Mrs. R. O. C. KING, 14 East St., Ipswich, Qld.

£25. Mrs. PAT DOUGHERTY, Centre St., South Casino, N.S.W.

#### Section 3

£250. Mr. J. A. SOUTAR, 36 Prosper Parade, Ashburton S11, Vic.

£50. Mr. J. F. STEWART, 68 Empress Rd., Surrey Hills, Vic.

£25. Mr. HAROLD McCORKILL, 97 Hodgkinson St., Clifton Hill, Vic.

#### Section 4

£250. Mrs. ALAN NEWMAN, 28 Closeburn Ave., Windsor, Melbourne.

£50. Mrs. J. CRAWFORD, 60 Gympie Bay Rd., Gympie, N.S.W.

£25. Mrs. B. D. CAMBRAY, Denison St. East, Mudgee, N.S.W.

### £250. SECTION 1

Best advice to a married couple from anybody



£250 PRIZE-WINNER in Section 1 of our contest, Mrs. Raimonde Brady, with her husband, Dr. Wilfrid Brady, and their daughter Jeannette and son Philip, photographed during a day in Melbourne. Both Dr. and Mrs. Brady entered the contest.

**LOVE** your partner with your whole mind, heart, and body, and, if for any reason physical love fails, continue loving him or her with heart and mind. Sex need not be priority No. 1.

Put your partner first always, before children, parents or close friends. You and he will be together, on the law of averages, long after life has claimed your children, and death your parents.

Be loyal to each other. Criticise each other's faults, failings, and negative qualities

if you must with a view to improving your loved one, but try not to do it in front of children or relatives. Above all things, don't criticise each other to your friends.

Be generous with your praise; life is a difficult business for most men and women, and, being human, they are easily discouraged and depressed. Your encouragement and sympathy will help to keep them going.

Respect each other's interests and pursuits. You cannot do everything together.

To the man I would say: "Give her a generous house-

keeping allowance; what is over is hers to save or spend." And to the woman I would say: "Please don't squander his money; he's worked hard for it."

If you have anything on your mind, get it off your chest before bedtime. You can easily magnify a tiny molehill into a towering mountain in the dead of night.

Try to love your in-laws. Remember that you owe your happiness in your mate to their upbringing and love.

Prize entries, other than those published on these two pages, will be found on pages 19, 24, and 40.

### £250. SECTION 3

Best advice to wives from a husband.

**THE** secret of a successful marriage is so simple really—just make us feel that you love us and need us.

Nowadays we men have a sneaking feeling that perhaps we are not the superior sex, that actually the sexes are fairly well-balanced—and we like it that way. We like our wives to be intelligent companions to us—but we still like to feel that you are leaning a little on our shoulders on our way through life.

Of course we love our children, and we're so proud of them—but we love you more and we want you to love us more.

Confidentially, you know, all these frightfully important things that you have to do to keep your man aren't so

frightfully important after all. Leave the housework, rush into town, come home late and burn the dinner—we'll get over it—but just once make us feel inadequate, that we are just the wage-earners in the home, and we'll really be upset.

We want to know that, of all the people in the world, we are the ones who are essential to your happiness and well-being. Let us know that, dear wives, and,

We will remain,  
Your loving husbands.

£250 PRIZE-WINNER in Section 3 of our contest is Mr. J. A. Soutar, photographed at right with his wife and family at the door of their home in Ashburton, Vic. In front are 7-year-old twins Rex and Bobby with Susie the dog, 10-year-old Ian, and Leonie (13).



● See also pages 19, 24, 40.



Introducing **Chrysella** the newest thing in Rayon



**Chrysella**  
COURTAULDS' NEW ACETATE YARN

Swims and other beautiful fabrics for glamorous figures and night things... taffetas, satins, jerseys and crepes... are all made from Chrysella, Courtaulds' wonderful new acetate yarn. You'll love the shimmering beauty of these Chrysella materials and the luxurious silken feel of them. You'll love their perfect drapes and the way they resist wrinkles, too. Chrysella is now being produced by Courtaulds in Australia.

COURTAULDS (AUSTRALIA) LIMITED



# Prize wedding-day photographs



**£250**

All of the joy and tender love of the perfect wedding day have been captured in this delightful candid photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Newman, of 28 Closeburn Avenue, Windsor, S1, Victoria, which wins first prize of £250 in Section 4 of our Happy Marriage Contest. The picture was taken on September 29, 1951, at the wedding reception held at the bride's former home in Perth. Mrs. Newman intends spending the prize-money on the house they are building at Beaumaris, Victoria. Mr. Newman, who is a constructional engineer, designed the house himself. They both work on it at week-ends.



**£50**

Charming wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. David Crawford, 60 Gynea Bay Road, Gynea, N.S.W., who were married on January 17, 1953, at St. Clement's Church, Mosman, N.S.W., wins second prize of £50. Mr. Crawford is now rector of St. Luke's Church, Miranda, N.S.W. "I'm so happy it hardly seems true," said Mrs. Crawford. "We have a three-months-old baby and I want to have five more children. I am busy all day long with being a mother."



**£25**

Bicycle wheels held by members of the local cycle club, of which the groom was manager, made an archway for Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Cumbray, Denison Street East, Mudgee, N.S.W., winners of £25 third prize, after their wedding in Kent, England.



# ROYAL VISIT TO WELLINGTON

● The five photographs of the Queen on these pages were taken by staff photographer Clive Thompson during Her Majesty's official engagements in Wellington, New Zealand.



**LEAVING WELLINGTON TOWN HALL.** The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in the car in which they drove to Government House after the civic reception. Her Majesty wore a coat dress of caramel surah flecked with black, with a black velvet collar, and a black velvet hat.



**INVESTITURE.** The Queen honors Dr. Bruce Levy at the investiture at the Town Hall, Wellington. Her Majesty was magnificently dressed in a gown of silver lace over gold lame and she added a diamond tiara and necklace.



**AT THE RACES.** The Queen congratulates jockey J. Garth, who won the Royal Wellington Cup at Trentham Racecourse on Golden Tan, owned by Mr. G. W. Hartstone. The Duke (right), the Governor of New Zealand, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and Lady Norrie are in the group.



**ABOVE:** The Queen with the Most Rev. R. H. Owen, D.D., Archbishop of New Zealand, when she laid the foundation stone for the Anglican Cathedral in Wellington.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** An informal picture of the Queen leaving the Town Hall after the investiture with the Duke and Lady Alice Egerton, one of her ladies-in-waiting.







# New Crest

WITH CREME-ROSE WAVING LOTION

*guarantees a faster*

With New Crest you whiz through "waving" faster than you'd imagine possible. The clever new Creme-Rose Waving Lotion supplies the lightning touch, yet is incredibly gentle... actually conditions your hair as it waves.

*longer-lasting*

Nice to know that though New Crest is gentle, your wave will last till the day it's cut off. Your guarantee: the magic duo in every New Crest Kit—the Creme-Rose Waving Lotion and the reliable neutraliser.

*more "natural" wave*

Most important of all, you just can't tell a Crest wave from naturally curly hair. It's gloriously shiny, silken to touch. You can punish it with salt water and sunshine... walk in a high wind... and a flick of the comb sends every wave back into place.



SOFT, SHINY AND  
NATURAL-LOOKING.  
THAT'S MY WONDERFUL  
NEW CREST WAVE

says lovely

*Lorraine Casey*

Air Hostess with Pan American World Airways.

When you board a clipper to San Francisco... to Rio... to Hawaii... there's a girl in Tunis-blue with a golden half-wing badge to watch your comfort half across the world.

## MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

New Crest will do more for you than any other Home Permanent, with or without neutraliser, to give you a lovelier, longer-lasting wave—or your money back. Simply write, supply details and enclose the empty box to Box 4100, G.P.O., Sydney.

Crest is available in 3 Kits  
FULL KIT  
REFILL (for any make of curler)  
JUNIOR KIT for end curls

Crest... THE CHOICE OF PAN AMERICAN HOSTESSES

C33.WW143E

MOTHER



"OF COURSE you can have my fare... if you can find it."

BUTCH



"May I? My nephews love it when I bring something home for them."

## It seems to me

A WATCH company in America has built a clock which tells the time both on earth and on Mars.

The designer is a space-travel writer, Dr. I. M. Levitt, who, if I know advertising promotion when I see it, has worked a publicity tie-up for his books and the company's clocks.

Recently I have developed what friends regard as a rather peculiar interest in space travel. They exchange significant glances when I mention it—unless they, too, have read some of the stories of Ray Bradbury.

A few weeks ago a friend put Bradbury's "The Silver Locusts" on my desk and said, "You must read that." I'd heard of him before, but, like many adults, had assumed a glazed, stubborn expression when anyone mentioned space-travel fiction.

Since then I have gone round earbashing anyone who will listen about Mr. Bradbury.

One reviewer, so I see on a dust-jacket, has compared the stories to those of Wells in his early days. To use an expression far removed from Bradbury's graceful, imaginative writing, I think he knocks Wells into a cocked hat.

A REPORT from London describes the tremendous excitement of a bus passenger who, crying "Eureka," was discovered to have obtained at last a bus ticket ending in 9999.

He had begun collecting sequences only three months before, completing the collection of a friend who had spent 40 years obtaining up to four sevens and then abandoned it.

It is one of those little stories where you have to dig for the moral. At first thought you may sympathise with the man who gave up and then saw success reward his friend.

No use asking, like little Peterkin, "What good came of it at last?" That applies to too much human endeavor.

The victory was really to the one who gave up. Imagine being able to abandon such a pursuit after 40 years. Picture the strength of mind needed not to look at a bus ticket. It would be harder than giving up smoking.

HOLLYWOOD matrimonial news has been especially entertaining this month—particularly the rift between Shelley Winters and Vittorio Gassman.

Shelley, a woman obviously of originality as well as good looks, promised to divorce Vittorio provided he paid £2000 a year for the support of the child and that he agreed to marry the young Italian actress who has been playing Ophelia to his Hamlet on the stage.

The money didn't worry Vittorio. Money is seldom a worry if there is enough of it. What annoyed him was his wife's impertinence in wishing to choose his next wife.

Which was doubtless precisely what the lady intended. Unfortunately or fortunately, whichever way you look at it, it is an unenforceable proviso. But it raised a speculative gleam in the eyes of many a wife. There would be few more subtle revenges.



Dorothy Drann

ALTHOUGH the Queen indicated early that she did not wish Australians to go to the expense of formal clothes for Royal occasions if they did not normally wear them, dress provides one of the most absorbing topics of the moment.

Women's clothes problems are comparatively easily solved. An overwhelming majority of women like to look their best, and to be correctly dressed. They are limited only by their pockets.

Men are much more difficult, and the controversy

about the clothes they will wear have been getting more attention than female fashions.

The New South Wales Premier (Mr. Cahill) has asked members of the Labor Cabinet to wear dark suits and Homburg hats to greet the Queen on the day she arrives. This is reported to have disturbed the Minister for Housing (Mr. Clive Evatt), who never wears a hat, and who is said to be considering carrying a Homburg, but not putting it on.

Women, accustomed to enduring all kinds of discomforts in order to look attractive, will not be very sympathetic to Mr. Evatt.

Most Parliamentarians, whatever their politics, are wearing formal dress for formal occasions, although there are a couple of Labor diehards who refuse ever to don a dinner jacket. This is really inverted snobbery.

I like much better the attitude of a Labor alderman in Sydney, who, saying that he would wear the correct dress to the Royal Ball, added that he didn't see why a Labor man shouldn't be dressed as well as anyone else.

SOME criticism recently of the railway booking queues at Challis House, Sydney, reminds me that in Perth I was quite overcome by the elegant waiting room in the railway booking office.

It's attractively furnished with upholstered seats along the wall. Intending passengers are given a number and sit until they are called. A similar system is used in Adelaide.

This method doesn't eliminate waiting, but it does mean that you can sit in comparative comfort instead of simmering with fury as a queue edges towards a counter.

THE Governor of Victoria (Sir Dallas Brooks) has said that unselfishness will help crowds to see the Queen properly. He suggested that tall people, for instance, might allow short people to stand in front of them.

Those who crouch or bump their heads

When they have to stand in buses,

Or who find that normal beds

Crimp them and evoke their curses,

May in no uncertain measure

Think that they're entitled to

Some advantage in the pleasure

Of an unobstructed view.

Therefore, shorties well may find,

Rather than get mad and madder,

Wiser than a "Do you mind?"

Is to take a box or ladder.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — February 3, 1954



BURSTING WITH Energy and Flavour!

LIFE SAVERS

THE QUALITY CANDY WITH THE HOLE... a Flavour to suit every taste.

Made from the world's finest cane sugar for energy  
and glucose to steady the nerves.

only 4<sup>D.</sup>



Our happy  
marriage contest:

# Pictures from the past



**MARRIAGE** of Commander and Mrs. Geoffrey Haggard at Holy Trinity Church, Kew, Victoria, on August 28, 1923, was a social occasion which attracted many spectators. A special additional award of £5 in our Happy Marriage Contest is made to Comd. and Mrs. Haggard's daughter, Mrs. J. Deasey, Flat 4, Bona Vista, 56 Darling St., South Yarra, Vic.



**DOUBLE WEDDING** (above) of Mr. and Mrs. F. Brown and Mr. and Mrs. A. May was celebrated at Candelo, N.S.W., on September 3, 1903. The brides were sisters. Below is a picture taken at the golden wedding celebrations, which were held at Artarmon, N.S.W., on September 3, 1953. Special £5 award to Mrs. F. Brown, 12 Broughton Rd., Artarmon, N.S.W.

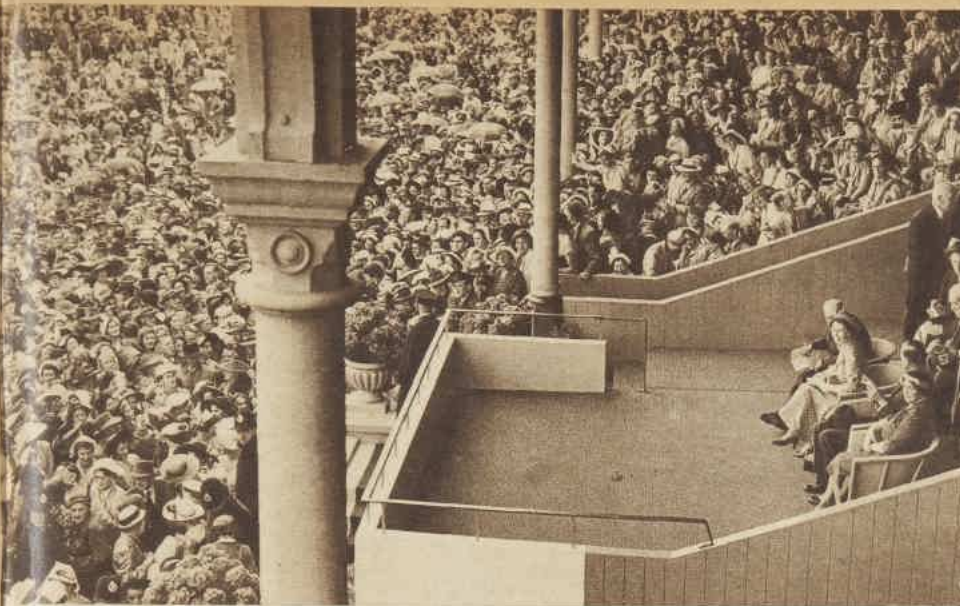


**MARRIED** at the height of the influenza epidemic, on May 3, 1919, Mrs. G. Bell later slipped off the flu mask which she was compelled to wear during the service, but her husband kept his on. The mask which the bride wore may be seen suspended from one ear. Mrs. Bell, of 7 Roslyn Avenue, Roseville, N.S.W., is awarded a special £5 prize for this interesting picture.



**IN THE DAYS** when the horse still held sway and cars were luxuries, Mr. and Mrs. R. S. McKay, who were married at Jones Island, N.S.W., on December 13, 1919, used a Tin Liz as their carriage to reach the reception after their marriage. The attendants were the bride's sister and niece. The dog, excited by all the fuss and finery, dashed out into camera range. Special £5 award to Mr. and Mrs. McKay's daughter, Miss Lois McKay, of Killabakh Creek, via Wingham, N.S.W.





**GAPING, PRESSING THROUG** staring at the Royal couple in the Royal box at the Ellerslie race meeting in Auckland, which constituted the worst crowd behaviour of the tour. New Zealanders have responded to criticism and now try to keep their zeal to see the Queen within the bounds of good taste.

**Tour experience shows . . .**

# Good and bad form on Royal occasions

As the Royal tour winds to Bluff and departure for Australia in Gothic, thoughtfulness for the hard-working young sovereign now over-rides the desire to clamor insistently for balcony appearances at each hotel in which she stays.

Breaches of behaviour are as rare now as excessive restrictions.

**NEW ZEALANDERS** have been told: "We don't want people milling about the hotel and calling out for the Queen." And the South Islanders are showing their affection by respecting the Queen's privacy.

In spite of the police request not to mill round the hotel where the Queen was staying in Christchurch, the crowds gathered and the Queen appeared three times.

These balcony appearances were loudly cheered, but there was little chanting of "We want the Queen."

Only when the Queen and Duke appeared on one balcony did the crowd at the other side of the hotel make a subdued call for her.

Before Her Majesty went in for dinner she heard the Royal Christchurch Musical Society choir of 100 voices sing for 25 minutes under the windows.

The women were soberly dressed in long white frocks; the men wore dinner suits.

They set a piano up in the road and sang nursery rhymes, finishing with the 23rd Psalm. This brought the Queen to a window.

The Duke raised the window, and they stood there together, the Queen in a brilliant blue decollete evening dress.

The crowds, trying hard to remember their manners, gave long-drawn "Oh's" of disappointment when the Queen and Duke withdrew from the window.

But when the Royal couple walked round the corridors from their suite and appeared on the balcony the biggest roar of cheering of the evening went up.

For three minutes the waving and ecstatic cheering went on, then the Queen and Duke went to dinner.

The crowd, patient and silent, waited hopefully for the Queen to make another balcony appearance. They were well rewarded for their mannerly behaviour when she did.

**Social gaffes**  
**UNREHEARSED** incidents—these at times have been quite embarrassing—have dwindled to insignificance.

The tour will long be remembered for the easier and simpler forms of Royal etiquette the Queen soon established. It has been stripped of meaningless formalities, and harmonised with good manners—the everyday good manners of decent folk.

Not an eyebrow has been raised if a housewife, mounting the dais before the neighbors in some country town, creaks into a half-bob and looks like remaining there.

More than once at the wayside stops some good soul, with flustered face and eyes shining with Royal devotion, has, in her anxiety, dropped to one knee so far short of the Queen that Her Majesty has had to move forward to take the outstretched hand.

Once, when a local worthy fluffed her curtsy, the crowd's

laughter was cut short on the first wave as the Queen's steady glance raked the critics.

For that councillor's stout wife the Queen had just those few extra words that put the whole presentation back into dignified perspective. And the Duke, always ready to help out in an awkward moment,

By  
**ANNE MATHESON,**  
our Royal tour correspondent in New Zealand

stepped forward with a warm handshake and gratifying inquiries about her husband's work in the community.

As ready as the Queen is to smooth over the little errors and omissions of the receiving line, she is equally quick to show her disapproval of ostentation or people out to exploit their meeting with Royalty.

Several women, particularly in Bermuda and Jamaica, have made theatrical entrances and thrown dramatic curtsies



**IN HER CORONATION DRESS**, the Queen, with the Duke, arrives at Parliament House, Wellington. Some women marred this solemn occasion by calling to Her Majesty: "Come on, give us a smile, Queenie."



**THE QUEEN** accepts a bouquet from Mrs. E. R. Spriggs, Mayor of McLean Park, New Zealand. Her Majesty's smile has the warmth with which she responds to natural good manners in those presented to her.

in a bid for the Queen's approval.

They only saw the Queen's smile disappear as she extended her hand, and her deep blue eyes look directly and unsmilingly at them.

The crestfallen in these little episodes rise from their well-rehearsed acts to get only the most formal handshake from the Duke.

These triumphs and failures of the receiving line are just theebb and flow of the long receptions.

The really serious breach of manners is to prolong a conversation with the Queen, to talk too much if escorting the Queen over a school or hospital or some place Her Majesty is inspecting, or to open up a conversation with her.

Talking too much, excitedly explaining too much, and distracting the Queen's attention with unnecessary remarks can be disastrous to her appreciation and enjoyment of any function.

I watched one official's wife fuss so much over the Queen with the programme, bending over her chair, drawing the Queen's attention to various items in it, that her Majesty—after a very long and tiring day—looked white and drawn.

English guests at the reception, accustomed to the strict but simple rules of Royal etiquette, said, "We were so embarrassed by the official's wife that we moved away."

**Best curtsy**  
**HUNDREDS** of curtsies have been dropped on this tour, but I think the most graceful was that of Yvette Williams, New Zealand Olympic broad jump champion.

This is surprising, for New Zealand women are not putting up any sort of a show as exponents of the graceful bob.

The West Indian women in Jamaica curtsied beautifully in long, low, unhurried sweeps with a slight inclination on the head and not a single overdone gesture.

By custom, the Tongans should have made obeisance by squatting in front of the Queen. But after much debate the Tongan nobles decided to adopt British etiquette in Her Majesty's honor.

Those presented to the Queen were well rehearsed, but although the Tongans are

graceful dancers their half-bobs and bows weren't anything to admire.

Here in New Zealand there are shuffles, whalebone curtsies, wobbly ones, the deep reverent curtsy that is almost a genuflect, the slight bend of both knees without moving a foot, but few really well-executed bobs among them.

Children presenting bouquets are a delight to watch and are completely uninhibited as they sink nearly to the ground.

The men, with their stiff bows, do much better, and, having no curtsy to worry them, have time to appreciate the Queen.

"A perfect little lady," you will hear the local councillor say with conviction as he leaves the dais. "Wonderful eyes, beautiful smile," raves another.

But the women, for once, seem rather silent, and there's a neighborly feeling among them as they exchange a relieved "Thank goodness that's over" look.

The women, too, seem to be responsible for quite a few of the breaches of manners.

Women in specially allocated seats outside Parliament House shocked everybody when they called to the Queen: "Come on, give us a smile, Queenie!"

The much publicised staring at the Queen at Ellerslie racecourse and the Civic Garden Party in Christchurch are two of the instances of collective bad behaviour.

**Individual breaches of good manners have been rare.**

The pushing crowds who close in on the Royal car and the cars in the Queen's entourage are also dangerous.

Only the vigilance and expert driving of the chauffeurs has prevented disaster.

The South Island, anxious that the Queen shall have the most harmonious atmosphere, is asking that no one breaks lines or closes in on the Queen's car; that remarks about persons in the Queen's entourage be not discourteous, since that is a discourtesy to the Queen.

Remarks when the Queen has passed by, meant jokingly, are rarely flattering to the occupants of the cars that follow—the Minister in attendance, the Royal Household officials, and the Press.



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exclusive peppermint  
flavour

P.34/W.W.71g

## DRESS SENSE by Betty Keep

● The nightgown illustrated on this page has been specially designed in answer to the reader whose letter appears below. Similar requests came from other readers in last week's fashion mail.

**MY** problem is a cotton nightgown to wear in hospital during my confinement. I would like a design with sleeves.

The nightgown I have chosen for you to wear in hospital is illustrated at right. It has the type of sleeves requested in your letter. It also has a lace trim and, more important, is front-fastened. To make the gown you will require 3½yds. 36in. material and 2½yds. lace edging. For further details and how to order, see lines under sketch.

**I** HAVE very narrow shoulders and, as I am also tall and thin, I have a rather unbalanced appearance. Is there any way I can disguise this defect?

Wide revers at the neckline of a jacket or dress help to give an impression of shoulder width.

**I** FIND it very difficult to machine nylon material without it puckering. I also find it is inclined to fray out. Is there any way these faults could be corrected?

Machine your nylon with nylon thread and when machining a seam use a fine needle. A french seam, not too narrow, will help to avoid frayed-out edges. The machine should be adjusted to a medium-size stitch; a too-small stitch will result in a puckered seam. Allow the tension of the machine to be fairly free, and guide the material by holding it at the front and back of the needle. Sew slowly and don't pull.

**WILL** you kindly let me know what is the correct length for a short-skirted evening frock?

Hem lines of short formal vary from 10in. to 12in. from the floor, depending on the shape of the dress and the width of the skirt. A slim line skirt can always be slightly shorter than a wide skirt.

**I** WANT to make a between-season coat and would like your advice about the length and color. I would prefer the coat loose-fitting. I will be wearing it with several printed silks that feature mauves and pinks.

A seven-eighth-length coat is the newest length for between seasons. This length stops a few inches above the hemline and gives the impression (worn with a print) of an ensemble. Ink-blue would be an attractive color to wear with pink and mauve.

**I** AM sure that you will be only too pleased to help a New Australian with a dress problem. The problem is



for late summer and early autumn.

Why not have a costume that can be worn for early or late day? This could be achieved by a halter-top dress, with its own short, lightly fitted jacket. The dress minus the jacket is ideal for after five, and worn with the jacket you have a costume suitable for any daytime occasion.

**COULD** you give me any helpful information about a good warm material for a winter suit? It is mainly for the country and I want it to be fashionable.

For a country suit, tweed, preferably a black-and-white tweed, could not be bettered for style and wear. Have the design classic and wear it with a splash of vivid color at the neckline — ruby-red or citron-yellow.

**WHAT** can I wear to give my figure a smooth look under a beltless princess-type of day frock?

A long-line bra or a foundation with midriff control will give the smooth line necessary for a princess dress.

**MY** problem is how to make a black velvetene dancer frock, and I would also like a couple of ideas to make it appear a different outfit for different occasions. I am quite a good dressmaker and am doing the making myself. My age is 22 and I have honey-blond hair.

My suggestion for your black velvetene dress is a bare-shouldered design with a princess-fitted waist, section spreading out below to a moderately "belled" hemline. The dress could be worn as described above, or with a separate, very full tie-on apron made in nylon net. Have two aprons, one in ribbed (the newest red in Paris) and one in coffee-brown.

**WOULD** you please help me in the choice of accessories to wear with a floral silk late afternoon frock. The floral design is rather blurred and is in beige and various pink tonings.

Brown should be the predominant color for your accessories. Choose dark chocolate-brown sandals (kid) and a matching handbag. For the gloves I like the idea of pink beige. Have the hat to match, tiny, and preferably made with small, massed blossoms.

**I** WILL be in Europe at the end of the winter and I am taking a black tweed suit with me. Would you suggest accessories which would look new and smart abroad?

Luggage tan looks chic with black-and-white tweed. Why not choose this color for a blouse, handbag, and gloves, and black for hats and shoes?

**DS72—Maternity nightgown.** Sizes 32in. to 35in. bust. Requires 3½yds. 36in. material and 2½yds. 3in. lace edging. Price, 3/6. Patterns may be obtained from Mrs. Betty Keep, Dress Service, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

whether a frock made with a pleated skirt would be correct for autumn. I am 20 years of age.

Yes, it would. Pleats, now that the short skirt is here, are having a field day for autumn and are proving a way of bringing the full skirt back into fashion.

**I** OFTEN read your answers to readers' problems and now I am hoping you will help me. I have 7½yds. of good navy-blue silk and can't decide whether it would be suitable for general day wear or for the late afternoon. I am in my thirties with a fairly good figure. I want the dress





**PRIVATE SECRETARY.** Mrs. H. B. Sewell, who is private secretary to Lady Lavarack, wife of Queensland's Governor, will be busy during the Royal visit from March 9 to March 18.



**MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNOR'S STAFF.** Probably the best-known members of the Governor's staff are (from left) his A.D.C., Lieut.-Commander J. Tucker; private secretary, Captain E. C. Rhodes; and official secretary, Lieut.-Colonel A. F. Stark, who are shown at Government House.

## THE ROYAL TOUR THEY WILL WORK BEHIND THE SCENES



**BUTLER** Mr. James Walker (above) supervises the setting of the dinner table, with footmen D. Smith and W. Mastenbrook.



**LAUNDRESS** Mrs. Illa Young (right) has been at Government House for thirty-eight years. The table linen is her special pride.



**GUARD** Sergeant Hubert Fenn has worked at Government House for thirty-two years, and has many souvenirs from distinguished guests.



**CONFIDENTIAL CLERK** Miss Constance Rouse (seated) and clerk-typist Miss Audrey Symons hard at work in their office at Government House.



**HEAD GARDENER** Mr. Lewis Pritchard. He is also a clever florist and for many years has made the Government House wreath for Anzac Day.

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Only Yardley know the secret of blending lavender with rare ottos and precious musks to give a concentrated longer-lasting fragrance.\*

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**VEET**  
hair-removing  
cream

Lovely Maureen O'Neil, 21-year-old Beauty Queen, says Veet hair-removing cream is a beauty "must."

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# VICE-REGAL HOMES READY FOR ROYALTY



ADELAIDE. State dining-room (above) where the Queen will dine at Government House, with the table set for a banquet. The dinner-service is cream with a fine gold band and tiny gold crown.

ADELAIDE. The Queen's bedroom (below) which leads into a boudoir which was used as a morning-room by the late Queen Mary when she visited here in 1901 as Duchess of Cornwall and York.



BRISBANE. Government House (above), which stands in 42 acres of parklands. Formerly it was "Fernberg," a large private home.

BRISBANE. Royal bedroom (below) at Government House. A small balcony leading off this room has a fine view of the city.



PERTH. The reception-room (left) at Government House, Perth, where the Queen and the Duke will be the guests of Sir Charles and Lady Gairdner.



HOBART. The drawing-room (right) at Government House where Sir Ronald and Lady Cross will entertain the Queen and her husband.





MELBOURNE. The Royal dais in the State Ballroom at Government House, Melbourne. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will attend a ball given by the Governor and Lady Brooks on February 25 before they depart for Adelaide.



MELBOURNE. The bedroom which the Queen will use during her stay at Government House. The room has pretty and feminine furnishings and overlooks a magnificent magnolia tree in the garden. A garden party will be held on March 2.



CANBERRA. Private wing at Government House which will be used by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh when they are guests of the Governor-General, Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, and Lady Slim during their Canberra visit.



SYDNEY. Main drawing-room (above) of Government House, which is furnished in period style with crystal chandeliers, secret vases, and pastel upholstery. This will be the Queen's first home in Australia.

SYDNEY. The water-lily pond (below) in the gardens of Government House, which overlooks Sydney Harbor. The Queen and the Duke will attend a garden party here on February 18 before leaving for Tasmania.





IF you see a great aluminium car, painted dark blue, bearing the number plate TT1, you'll know that it belongs to British comedian Tommy Trinder, now in Sydney to appear in the Royal gala performance at the Tivoli Theatre on February 6.

Tommy, the famous funny man, has driven it 130,000 miles through 17 different countries, and from Western Australia across the Nullarbor Plain.

"I reckon the abos, built the road," said Trinder, deadpan. "There are potholes, and more potholes inside 'em."

"Stopped TT1 at a place called Balladonia for petrol. Bought some from a couple there. The wife was from Glasgow and the husband from London. They lived 130 miles from the nearest neighbor."

"Said to their kid: 'What do you eat here?'"

"He said: 'Eggs and mutton, and mutton and eggs, eggs and mutton'."

"Then I asked: 'Aren't you lonely?'"

"'Well,' they said, 'we've got the radio!'"

Tommy opened wide his bright mud-colored eyes.

"Drive me mad," he said, "if I had to listen to a certain couple of comedians all day. But I'm a man who likes company, y'know."

#### PICNICKING on North

Head, which commands the entrance to Sydney Harbor, we watched a small boy and his father having a look at a deserted cliff-top gun-site.

The voice of the younger generation floated clearly to us. "Is this where the goodies shot at the buddies?" it asked, clarifying the issues of World War II very nicely.

# Worth Reporting

IN the next few weeks deaf people who are expert at lip reading may witness choice fragments of Royal conversation like the deaf children lining a section of the Embankment in London on Coronation morning.

The Queen, nervous at the prospect of the day ahead, looked strained as the Royal coach approached this point.

But a husbandly remark from the Duke soon wreathed her face in smiles and sent the deaf children into hysterics: "Cheer up, Sausage!"

#### Special food for Britain

TO commemorate the visit of the Queen to Queensland, the United Food for Britain Association is hoping to send back by S.S. Gothic on its return trip to Britain a food gift mainly of Queensland preserved fruits — pineapple, papaw, mangoes — Queensland nuts, and first quality Queensland tinned meat.

The gift will be for distribution to incapacitated ex-service men and women and to children of former service personnel of the British Legion, an organisation of which the Queen is patron.

Distribution of the gift will be made under the personal supervision of the president of the British Legion, Sir Ian Fraser. Miss Mona Fitzgerald, who has done much valuable work for the "Food for Britain" Appeal, is honorary secretary of the special Queensland Royal tour tribute.

#### Going at a safe clip

WHITE leatherette covered bicycle clips and safety driving gauntlets, both inset with red glass reflectors, have been introduced by a Melbourne leather goods manufacturer.

The devices have been highly commended by the Police Department.

The clips are not intended to replace the usual reflectors on bikes, but provide cyclists with greater safety, the revolving action of the leg-worn reflector drawing the attention of motorists to traffic ahead.

The gauntlets enable night drivers to emphasise "slow" and "stop" hand signals. Held in with elastic at the wrist to keep out cold winds, they also encourage drivers not to neglect safety signals in wintry weather.

#### He waits upon the Duke

THE Wickenden family of Prosper Street, Rozelle, Sydney, will have an extra special reason to cheer when Gothic arrives.

They'll be welcoming home 24-year-old Jim Wickenden, who has been a steward in the Queen's dining-saloon during the voyage.

Letters posted en route describe how Jim went about his duties of serving the Duke in the saloon, which holds 17 people.

"The Queen sits opposite, with her back to the window and on the starboard side of the table," wrote Jim. "The Marine Band plays during lunch and dinner."

Jim added that he had a few souvenir menus and music programmes.

#### FAMILY HOME CONTEST

##### Progress prize plan next week

First progress award in our Family Home Contest amateur section will be announced next week.

There are two sections in the contest, one for amateurs and one for architects. Full details of both were published in our issue of January 13.

First prize in each section, £1000. Total prize-money is more than £3000, including progress awards.

The professional section of the competition is open only to members and student members of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, and to architects registered in any State of the Commonwealth, or in the Australian Capital Territory, and to students who are attending an architectural school recognised by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, as listed in R.A.I.A. Year Book 1953.

#### They refuse to die out

FROM the far north-west of Australia comes the heartening news that the aborigines, who for years have been decreasing in numbers and in danger of dying out, are now on the increase.

Our two informants are famous bushman and authority on aborigines Bill Harney, of Darwin, N.T., and Mrs. Joy Macmillan, wife of engineer-missionary Lindsay Macmillan, of the Kimberleys, Western Australia.

They tell us there are more piccaninies this year than there have been for many, many years.

Said old Bill Harney: "White men need the labor, so they encourage the bucks to settle down and bring their families. The lubras feel socially secure and have more babies."

"Never saw so many children playing about compounds and camps, and the white men have to put up with them if they want fathers to stay and work for them," he added with his eyes twinkling.

And Mrs. Macmillan, who works with her husband on Wotjulum Mission Station in the north-west Kimberleys, said that three years ago there were six children in the compound, but today there are 23 infants under six years of age.

"We run a baby clinic and the native mothers do everything we tell them to keep their babies healthy," she went on. "We can even rear twins now, which is most unusual with aborigines, as when a woman has twins one nearly always dies of malnutrition."

"The mothers come in for their issue of baby oil, soap, and boracic, and we have trained an aboriginal girl to run the Baby Health Centre."

#### FISH instead of TV now threaten radio.

So says a workmate of ours, who has just been stocking a small aquarium at her home with goldfish and guppies.

When buying the fish from the supplier, she mentioned that she had heard it was best to watch fish.

"My word, yes," the man answered. "As a matter of fact, I go home, have my dinner, then pull my chair up to the tank and look at the fish. I hardly ever turn on the radio now!"

#### Song of youth

AUSTRALIAN composer John Antill, so we hear, has written the music for some words spoken by nearly four-year-old Barbara Bradshaw, of Croydon Park, N.S.W.

Barbara's mother, Mrs. Donald Bradshaw, heard her daughter singing softly to herself, and took down these words, which seem inspired by the coming visit of the Queen:

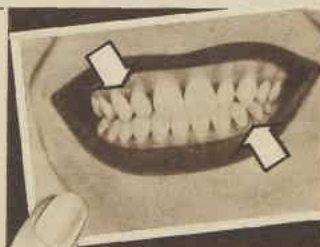
I've a welcome moon so bright,  
Stars so night,  
The moon is pink and lovely  
sprite,  
And I am floating on a cloud  
so high.  
I love to see the chimneys and  
the roofs of houses  
And the snow so white,  
I love to skate on the snow  
so white.  
I can easily eat a bit of snow.

I see a fairy floating up with  
me—  
She's got a king with a silver  
gown.  
And her names are Queen  
Elizabeth,  
And King Elizabeth,  
And Jenny,  
And John!

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GREEN KOLYNOS actually helps to build new gum tissue!

**SORE, PUFFY, RECEDING GUMS...** Soreness, puffiness or bleeding can lead directly to pyorrhea and the loss of teeth! Take care of your GUMS, and see how much healthier your whole mouth feels. See your dentist regularly — but start using green KOLYNOS today!



**STRONG, FIRM, HEALTHY GUMS...** Regular use of Kolynos with Chlorophyll will help build firm, healthy gums—and keep them that way! Used after meals, green Kolynos can mean the difference between a healthy mouth and sweet breath—or unhealthy gums and bad breath.

Keeps teeth free from tooth decay acids!

Dentists have long known that enzymes change starches and sugars into tooth decay acids. Now in Kolynos with Chlorophyll the way has been found to stop the destructive action of these acids!

Kolynos with Chlorophyll contains a special anti-enzyme ingredient which neutralizes those acids—the moment you begin to clean your teeth after a meal! Enjoy this extra protection no other Chlorophyll Toothpaste can offer. Change to Kolynos with Chlorophyll.

A "SWEET-BREATH, CLEAN MOUTH" TOOTHPASTE IS NOT ENOUGH! USE GREEN KOLYNOS TO KEEP YOUR TEETH FREE FROM TOOTH DECAY ACIDS AND HELP BUILD NEW GUM TISSUE.

**KOLYNOS** with Chlorophyll





# When bedroom elegance is *Fashion wise* ...

... you may be certain that Vantona Bedcovers have played their part in bringing about the marriage of cultivated refinement and smart, fashionable ideas in design, colour and texture. Bedrooms that are furnished with these subtle creations of the weaver's art reflect an atmosphere of impeccable taste and luxury. Vantona Bedcovers do not crease in use and their colours remain fresh and attractive. Indeed, Vantona Bedcovers are things of beauty and a joy to live with through the many gracious years of their service.

A canopy arranged from a matching Vantona Bedcover is another fashionable innovation that will provide a note of tasteful originality and add to the beauty of your bedroom decor.



Here is an appealing idea for adding to the attraction of your bedroom. Make your curtains from matching Vantona Bedcovers. The effect is charming and will earn the admiration of all your guests!



**WORTH ASKING FOR.** Do ask your store about the famous Vantona Blansheets and Towels. Blansheets are one of the world's brainwaves when it comes to bedtime cosiness. Because of their insulating quality, they keep you snugly warm in winter and deliciously cool in summer. Available in white and exquisite pastel shades.

Vantona Towels with their cheerful colours and designs will add a splash of gaiety to your bathroom. Their soft, absorbent texture simply drinks up the moisture. Here is British craftsmanship at its best.



## VANTONA BEDCOVERS

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY - February 3, 1954

VA 45A/WWFPC

Page 31



# Why you should *insist* on **Mortein plus**

**GUARANTEED NOT TO CONTAIN D.D.T.**



## DOCTORS INSIST...

that flies are the most dangerous carriers of dirt and disease... that they are the greatest menace to the health of adults and children alike and that any family that fails to provide protection against contaminating flies is taking a grave risk.

Ask your doctor which is the safest insect spray to use — a D.D.T. spray or Mortein Plus. The answer is Mortein Plus... because it can be sprayed without hazard in sick-rooms, around children's toys and in the presence of milk or other foods.



## HEALTH AUTHORITIES INSIST...

that the utmost care should be taken to guard against fly-borne diseases.

The Commonwealth Health Department confirms your doctor's view that, in protecting your family by frequent use of an insect spray, you should choose one which will not contaminate milk and other foodstuffs. You can be quite sure on this point, and of the swift destruction of all flies and insect pests, if you use only Mortein Plus. Insist on Mortein Plus... the most effective insect spray in Australia — and the safest.



## SCIENTISTS INSIST...

that increasing numbers of flies are becoming immune to D.D.T.

Mortein Plus is guaranteed to kill such flies as well as all others. The insect-killing ingredients in Mortein Plus are also guaranteed to be 100 times safer than those in commonplace D.D.T. sprays.

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swiftly and safely kills flies,  
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old picture-frames. Mothballs rattled away as she pulled and she almost left the book where it was. Imagine studying a subject smelling of camphor!

But when she got it out and took it to the window it hadn't a green cover. The binding was black, and on the front where the title should be was a flower-piece done in tin splinters. Rose touched them, admiring their brittleness, and one or two broke off under her fingertips. The book had a clasp and the clasp had a tiny keyhole. But the keyhole meant business—the book was locked.

Rose bent back the edges of the pages to get a squint at them. All she could make out was that the book was written by hand in muddy violet ink.

Rose stood there frowning. She was not wrestling with her conscience, she was considering the way to get the book open. If she couldn't pick the lock she would have to burst it. But not to show. She didn't know who the book belonged to—it was stiff with camphor and couldn't have been referred to for years—but as soon as she took an interest the owner was sure to turn up.

She spent half an hour trying to pick the lock with a hat-pin. She found a steel knitting-needle, wrapped it in her handkerchief and forced it between the clasp and the binding.

One sharp wrench and the little clasp buckled as if it would come out of its socket. Another, and it flew open. Rose sat down with the book in her lap under the window.

She took care to start at the fly-leaf. "Cookery recipes, of course," she said aloud. If she was going to be disappointed she preferred to get the first stab in.

There was a name on the fly-leaf, one word written large and dashing—"Phoebe." So great had been the dash that the pen

jibbed at the final "e" and left a spatter of violet blots.

Phoebe. So that's where the book belonged. Had belonged. Rose almost shrugged. It would be like Phoebe to buy a book with a clasp, to scribble in it nothing more than her own dress measurements and perhaps some verses from Tennyson, lock it up and throw away the key.

For the sole purpose of laying on afterwards about the whole thing being done in her heart's blood—sweeping up and down in one of those awful white dresses, clutching the book to her breast. "My poor sister Phoebe," Rose had heard her mother say, "never had any chest. She was flat as board all the way down."

Phoebe, they used to call her, and now—"Poor Phoebe." That was because she didn't get from them, even after all these years, the respect to which the dead are entitled.

There was something about her, some fatal absurdity they never forgave. It was as if she had stepped, again and again, over the bounds of good sense—that made her a fool; good manners—that made her a hoyden; and good taste—that muddled the whole family. They ganged up on her. Father, mother, sister, and brother-in-law—the family as it then was—cast off

Phoebe until she should outgrow her own silliness. But Phoebe outgrew nothing, except perhaps those terrible white dresses which clung to her sharp shanks and peered up over her bony wrists in all her photographs.

She lived in this very house, with her parents and her newly wedded sister and the sister's husband, and she acted worse and worse. Rose knew all about it. Over the years she'd gleaned a bit here and a bit there—Phoebe's crazes, Phoebe's fits, Phoebe's downright criminal greenness.

One afternoon just before her nineteenth birthday she was picking a corset factory, a policeman gave chase, and she and her banner ran under a bus. There was nothing to do with her, that corset factory. The managing director was an old business associate of her father's, but she didn't work there, nor did she buy their corsets.

However, the labor conditions of the women employees had suddenly become Phoebe's cross—suddenly was the way things happened to Phoebe—and she expressed her feelings in black banner letters painted on a white tablecloth tacked to a pole.

## Continuing . . . . Poor Phoebe

from page 3

"We Want Fair Play," she began, and farther down got quite rude; rude, that is, to the factory management. Off she went, all alone, to tilt at her windmill, and twenty minutes later she was dead. But not before an amateur photographer had got a picture of Phoebe, knees up, hair down, and banner on high, running from the policeman.

That picture was kept out of all but one of the local newspapers; it made the first page of the national dailies. Phoebe was gone and the family had to bear it alone. They never could forgive her, though they tried.

They said, "Poor Phoebe," and to anyone outside their own circle she was "just high-spirited and highly strung and very, very impulsive." But in this house the silly things she did lived after her, lived and grew fatuous.

That's how they seemed to Rose. She turned another page of the book. She began to read.

It wasn't cookery recipes and it wasn't Tennyson. It was the poorest babbling, scrawled out in violet ink, underscored, thick with exclamation marks, the

nib spitting and spitting through the paper. It was done at such pressure that sentences, even words, were left unfinished. Rose could hardly read it.

As far as she could make out, Phoebe had taken up her pen against life. She likened it to a net, a snare, and a trap; she didn't seem to know whether she was fur or feather, but the gist of it was that she was caught.

Rose scowled. She had the book on her knees, tilted towards the light. Right at the bottom of the page, spilling over it, Phoebe had written, "I must be calm!" and stabbed a line under each word. "Oh, go on!" muttered Rose. She turned the page.

Overleaf the writing was slightly better; anyway, it was easier to read. A word caught Rose's eye. She went back to the beginning of the sentence.

"I don't have to ask what it is," Phoebe had written, "it's the oldest, blackest thing in the world. I am eighteen and I have always known what is right, but—oh heavens, this fits me like a glove. Fits? If that were all, I could tear it off, I could slit it with knives, shivel it in the fire—"

Frowning deeply, Rose skipped a page. Then it was that her eyes opened wider, they began to devour the page, and even her ears—neat, rounded ears—pricked up.

The book was half-filled with Phoebe's handwriting. Rose read it to the last scrawl. Then she turned back to the beginning and read every word she had missed.

She read it all through twice and searched the blank pages at the end. Finding nothing more, she closed the book, hid it at the back of a shelf, and went down to tea.

There were eclairs on the table. Usually Rose could account for three. For that reason, although there were only she and her mother and grand-mother at tea, the plate held five pastries. This afternoon Rose ate half an eclair and pushed at the other half with her fork.

"Aren't you well, dear?" said her grandmother.

"Oh, perfectly," said Rose. She pretended to look out of the window at the garden, and then, as if making conversation—"What was Aunt Phoebe like?"

"Like?" The grandmother raised her eyebrows. She still had very black, thin brows. "Why, she was like the rest of us, sometimes happy, sometimes not. But whatever she was, she couldn't sit still—"

"Was she beautiful?"

"She might have been—"

later. The grandmother looked searchingly at Rose. "She was too young and much too thin."

"Skinny," said Rose's mother. "Phoebe was always skinny."

"It's easy to make fun of the dead, isn't it?" said Rose. "Excuse me, please." She got up from the table and left the room.

"That was very odd of Rose," said Rose's mother.

"It was very rude."

"I suppose she's full of justice—you know how criminally just young people are. Rose's is such an awkward age."

"My dear," said Rose's mother's mother, "if you had been that awkward, I should have slapped you."

Rose had gone back to the attic. She stood at the window and put her hands on the hot glass. She was fond of the ivy's bitter smell, she liked the mess it made on the sill, the weeds and grass and rich summer debris. It reminded her of sleep.

A hundred years, she used to

To page 34

### IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY



### BY RUD

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## Foster Clark's creamy custard

ASK FOR FOSTER CLARK'S NEW "SUMSHUS" JELLIES WITH THE SEALED "FLAVOUR BUD"

## Continuing . . . . Poor Phoebe

from page 33

think, and after she had dozed off for half an hour she liked to pretend the brambles were through the floorboards. Today the dead leaves and all the frail rubble looked ominous, there was the dead body of a fly blowing in a web.

Rose took Phoebe's book from its hiding-place. She handled it with care, she unhooked the broken clasp and opened it at the fly-leaf.

She read the name—"Phoebe"—the even sought out and dwelt upon each faded sputter of violet ink round the final "e." Then she began to dip, reading a page here and there, reading some passages in it again and again.

The impact was complete now. It was as if a parcel of explosive had detonated after a long, leisurely fall. Parts of Rose were in amthereena, the parts she had thought indestructible.

In her locked book Phoebe left an account of a love affair, the whole unhappy incident from start to finish. Such an outpouring could not have been intended for anyone but herself; it was an outlet—the only one she had—for her unhappiness.

She must have meant to destroy it later on, when she could bear to. She had locked the book, the ink was still vivid on the pages, and she thought life was at an end. But she didn't expect to die.

It was all there, from the moment when "he"—she never called him by name—first took notice of her to the day they parted. A few weeks it lasted, weeks of tumultuous and terrible passion. Phoebe never did things by halves. Better for her if she had.

Poor Phoebe, she was quite unprepared. She thought, no doubt, she would love when and where she chose, if she chose to love at all. Life was so full of so many other things.

Came the thunderclap, and thereafter the storm raged. Perhaps it ceased only with her death, for right at the end she wrote, "It's over, we have parted. I have given him my ring, my little blue cameo with the white dolphin. That's for remembrance of what might have been."

"Goodness knows, I tried not to say it, I even dared pray I would never find the courage. Today that hateful courage sought me out, I heard myself say, 'We must end this. It is the only thing to do.'"

"After a long while he said, 'I suppose so.' Oh, he is right, he is being honorable, but I—If he had said, 'Come with me,' I would have gone to the world's end."

It was only to be expected, their having to part. Rose, who was not unkind, would have been disappointed with any other ending. She believed true love ought never to run smoothly, and that was about the only illusion that Phoebe's diary left her.

Rose had always thought passion in love was felt by men, and men only. She saw it as a tendency to get down on one knee, and she thought men were liable to it.

She thought a girl should not need to bat an eyelid to inspire it, and when she had inspired it, she could take it or leave it. That was what Rose had always thought.

But Phoebe gave a different picture. Phoebe had been passionately in love and there was more, much more to it, it seemed, than going down on one knee.

Rose shivered. It was like straying on to a beach in winter and having the sea dwarf you. Rose had not known the half of it.

"Rose."

She jumped. Her mother stood behind her. There was no

time to hide Phoebe's book. Rose gave it a shove and it fell. She had to get down on the floor and scramble for it.

"I didn't hear you come in," she said, scarlet-faced, from the floor.

"If you'd been in your own room I should have knocked."

"This is my room—"

"This is the lumber-room," The diary was in Rose's hand, burning her fingers. Mrs. Rankin looked about with her cool, impersonal air. "Why do you like it?"

"I just do. It's peaceful."

"You shouldn't be looking for peace at your age."

"I wish people wouldn't keep talking about my age!"

"Why not? You're growing up. If you're not aware of it, we are. We try to make allowances for your moods. And your rudeness—" she said it mildly, almost as an afterthought.

"I wouldn't have been rude if you weren't."

"I?" Mrs. Rankin shrugged in surprise. There was the faint, sweet, leathery smell Rose always associated with her.

"About Phoebe, you mean?"

"You sneered at her and she wasn't there to defend herself."

"My dear, I only said she was skinny—which is true," Mrs. Rankin smiled. "Sometimes I think if her figure had been better she wouldn't have been such an anarchist."

Rose felt the color rush into her cheeks. She thought it must have rushed into her eyes, for

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suddenly the dim attic looked red.

"Poor Phoebe! You all call her that, don't you? But she wasn't. She was rich—I'd rather live and suffer like she did than be dead and dry and dusty like all of you!"

Mrs. Rankin looked at her daughter's red and brimming face. "What on earth has come over you, child?"

It would have been better if she hadn't used just those words or just that look. Both words and look she had used to Rose through baby tantrums and childish tears. There had been times when, more than any caress, they whisked away bogies and quelled nightmares. But now there was no deadlier insult than to call Rose a child and treat her as one.

"I suppose you think I don't know what I'm talking about—because I never met her, because she died before I was born—but I do! I know all about Phoebe!"

Mrs. Rankin disliked tears. She said, "Indeed?" And to Rose her thin smile of embarrassment looked like a sneer.

"Yes—indeed!"

It had become a battle between them. Rose had a decisive weapon literally in her hands. Not caution but possessiveness made her hesitate to use it. She stood with Phoebe's diary held absurdly at her back. Her face was an explosive red.

"You'd better go to bed, I'll talk to you in the morning."

"You don't believe me, do you? You think I can't help it—because of my awkward age—" She thrust the book at her mother.

More for her own justification than Phoebe's, she was cry-

ing. "Read this and you'll see I'm speaking the truth!" Then she burst into tears.

Mrs. Rankin gave her a long look. She saw with concern the big, breathy sobs which shook Rose's breast. She let her sobs spring out of her chest into her throat and gulped them back again. Mrs. Rankin winced and turned to the book.

She was a quick reader, and she didn't seem to find any difficulty with Phoebe's handwriting. All the same, Rose had time to repent what she had done. It was a betrayal—Rose knew that five seconds after.

Mrs. Rankin looked up. "Do be quiet, Rose."

Rose blew her nose. She was exhausted, but she couldn't be quiet, she had hiccups.

Mrs. Rankin had taken the book to the window. She turned the pages briskly, she might have been reading Rose's holiday essay.

"Hup!" said Rose. She was feeling drenched and listless and now she was sorry for her mother, who would have to carry such a weight of remorse. Mrs. Rankin suddenly shut the book with a snap—it was so unexpected that it stopped Rose's hiccups. She examined the broken clasp before she thrust the diary under her arm.

"I shall put this on the fire."

"I suppose we shall never forget it. I know some bits by heart."

"You had better unlearn them."

"Why?"

Mrs. Rankin tapped the book with her finger. "This is the most pernicious rubbish I've ever read."

"Rubbish!"

"Phoebe never had such an affair in her life. She was foolish and reckless, but she didn't sink to these depths."

"How could she write about it?" cried Rose. "How could she describe it all?"

"My sister had a strong imagination," Mrs. Rankin's lips grew thin. "And she was rather plain. Romance, I'm afraid, existed only in her fancy. When you're older you will realise what an unhappy fancy it was."

"That's not true—I never shall—I believe every word of it!"

"Naturally I don't expect you to take my word for it. I can prove what I say."

Rose told herself that she wouldn't believe. There couldn't be proof that could make her. But already, at her mother's elbow, dodged the shadow of poor Phoebe, her white dress peeling up over her wrists.

"The ring she mentions, the blue cameo engraved with a white dolphin, was one she lent me the day before she died."

"If you had ever had a sister," said Mrs. Rankin calmly, "you would know they always borrow each other's things. Phoebe and I were no exception. The ring never left her possession until she lent it to me. I have it still. Come downstairs and I'll show you."

She went, taking the diary with her, and Rose had to follow. She dawdled, pushing the palm of her hand until it squeaked along the banister-rail. The battle was over and her mother had won. Come to think of it, she always did.

Rose stared bitterly. What a knack she had of making everything dull and ordinary, of taking the richness and rarity out of life—was it a trick Rose must expect to acquire when she grew up? I never will, vowed Rose, I'll never be like that.

Yes, the battle was over and Mrs. Rankin had won it. That was her consolation as she went to fetch the ring she had found, sixteen years ago, in her husband's waistcoat pocket.

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Continuing . . . . .

I did if I hadn't been sorry for poor little Mavis!" declared Mrs. Midgeholme. "It wasn't her fault, though; if you were to ask me, I should say that she's a perfect fool not to put her foot down. However, if she likes to make a doormat of herself it's no concern of mine. But when it comes to ill-treating one of my Peekies it's a very different matter. Not one word will I speak to him until he's apologized, and so I told him. And if I were to go to the Cedars and find him there I should tell him exactly what I think of him, which would make things uncomfortable for Mrs. Haswell. So I'm not going."

She gave Ursula a hitch, tucking her more securely under her arm, and stated firmly: "What's more, it will serve him right if Mavis runs off with that Pole—not that I think she would, and I hope very much she won't do anything silly, because he hasn't got any prospects that I know of, besides being a foreigner. But there it is!"

"Pole?" repeated Mr. Drybeck blankly.

"Oh, don't you know him? He works at Belvidere, and lives in the end one of the row of cottages beyond you," said Mrs. Midgeholme. "At least, he lodges there. Old Mrs. Dockray," she added, for his further enlightenment.

"I fancy I have not met the young man," said Mr. Drybeck, in a tone that gave little indication of his wishing to do so.

"Well, I daresay you wouldn't have. He hasn't been here for long, and, though I believe he's quite all right—I mean, his father is supposed to have had estates in Poland, and that sort of thing, one never knows with foreigners, does one? Actually, I met him at the Lindales', but,

## Detection Unlimited

[from page 7]

of course, he isn't generally received."

She added thoughtfully, "I don't know how Mavis came to know him, but I'm sure I don't grudge her a little fun, for it's not much she gets. He's very attractive. So good-looking, and such lovely manners! I'm not surprised poor Mavis is a bit smitten."

"Are you perhaps referring to a dark youth who rides a par-

pretentious but seemly residence on the Trindale-Bellingham road.

The village, which included Old Place, with its wide domain, lay in the broad half of the triangle of the roads connecting Bellingham with Trindale, on the south, and Hawkshead on the north, the narrow part of the triangle being occupied by common land, which was, in fact, intersected by the northern road. Miss Patterdale's old-world and extremely inconvenient cottage faced on to it; and also Mr. Warrenby's Fox House overlooked it.

It was a gravel common, with one or two pits and a great many gorse bushes, and it provided the youth of the village with football grounds and cricket pitches and Miss Patterdale with grazing for her two goats.

Major Midgeholme, having repelled the Pokes, greeted his helpmate and Mr. Drybeck, as they stood together at the corner of the street. He was a slight man of medium height, with grizzled hair and a tooth-brush moustache. It was tacitly assumed, since he had been retired with the rank of major, that his military career had been undistinguished, but when the local defence volunteer organisation had been formed in the second year of the war he had surprised his neighbors by disclosing hitherto unsuspected talents.

As the only military man in the district who was not of fighting age, it had fallen to him to raise and train the first recruits. This he had done with conspicuous success, even inducing the two most noted poachers in the neighborhood not only to join the force, but to present themselves occasionally at drill parades.

There was no doubt that he had been in his element, and had enjoyed the war very much. With the peace he had sunk back into the position of playing second fiddle to his wife, who, ironically enough, never ceased to regale her acquaintances with tales of his military efficiency, sage civil judgment, and general competence to deal brilliantly with any situation that might arise.

She greeted him now with bright affection. "Well met, Lion! Just off to the Cedars? Give my love to Mrs. Haswell. Any news?"

This question was uttered rather tensely. The major, bestowing a nod and a small, perfunctory smile upon Mr. Drybeck, replied undramatically: "No, I don't think so."

"Thank goodness!" uttered Mrs. Midgeholme, supplying all that was lacking in her husband's attitude. "I was of two minds about leaving the house, for I thought she seemed the west-bit restless." She directed a conspiratorial smile at Mr. Drybeck, and admitted him into the mystery, saying archly: "A Happy Event! My treasured Ullapool's first litter!"

Mr. Drybeck could think of nothing better to say than: "Indeed!" and the major, whose consciousness of his wife's absurdities impelled him to do what he could to justify them, said apologetically: "Delicate little beggars, you know!"

"No, Lion! Not delicate!" said Mrs. Midgeholme. "But with a first litter one can't be too careful. I must away! Play well, both of you! Come, Peekies! Come with Mother!"

With these words, and a wave of one hand, she set off down the street, leaving the two men to proceed in the opposite direction towards Wood Lane.

"Extraordinarily intelligent, those Pokes," said the Major, in a confidential tone. "Sporting, too. You wouldn't think it

To page 41

### Mona Lisa and the Queen

THE intriguing half-smile on the lips of Leonardo da Vinci's famous Mona Lisa has been transferred to a tapestry portrait of Queen Elizabeth, the work of a New Australian woman in Sydney.

The artist, Mrs. Ellena Buiko, spent 1144 hours working the portrait in fine petit-point. She called it "The Happy Queen of All Australians," but when it was nearing completion she realised that she had made the Queen look too serious.

"So I studied the features of da Vinci's Mona Lisa and included her expression in my portrait of the Queen," she said.

The story of Mrs. Buiko appears in this week's Royal tour number of A.M., the Australian Magazine.

ticularly noisy motor cycle?" inquired Mr. Drybeck.

"Yes, that's the one. Ladislav Zama—something-or-other. I never can get my tongue round it. There's Lion. Look who's coming. Peekies. Run and meet father!"

They had by this time reached the cross-road. To the left could be seen the unimpressive figure of Major Midgeholme, trying to preserve his white flannels from the excited advances of the Ultimas, who were barking and jumping at him. To the right, the street led on past the church and the vicarage, to the lane winding up to the front drive of the Cedars.

Beyond this lane the street continued, scrapping a few small shops and picturesque cottages, and Mr. Gavin Plenneller's Queen Anne house, which was set back from it in a walled garden. It then ran between hedges through open country until it came to an end at the imposing though sadly worn gates of Old Place, the squire's home.

Thornden could boast of no village green or ancient stocks, but it contained, in addition to several houses built in more elegant ages, which any house agent would have described as gentlemen's residences, a good many half-timbered cottages of honest antiquity, and a Perpendicular Church with a Jacobean Rood screen, photographs of which had been reproduced in at least three books on Ecclesiastical Architecture.

The vicarage was of Victorian date, and had apparently been designed to accommodate a large family; but besides Old Place, which had all the charm of a house built in the sixteenth century and enlarged by succeeding generations, there was Gavin Plenneller's rose-red gem in the High Street; Mr. Henry Haswell's solid Georgian mansion at the end of Wood Lane; the rather older but less important house inhabited by Sampson Warrenby, on Fox Lane; and Mr. Drybeck's un-



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# Kipling's India in Technicolor



KHYBER RIFLEMEN convey newly acquired weapons to safeguard the British garrison from marauding rebel forces.



*Film Fan-Fare*

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★ Colorful and stormy events in British India of 100 years ago are depicted in "King of the Khyber Rifles" (20th Century-Fox). Filmed in spectacular CinemaScope, the story is Kiplingesque in mood. It tells how a British soldier (played by Tyrone Power) is given command of the Khyber Rifles to quell a native rebellion and save a British military garrison from being wiped out.

LEFT: Disguised as an Afriidi tribesman, Captain King (Tyrone Power) is entertained by a native dancer when he visits the bazaar quarter seeking news of rebels. BELOW: Arch villain Kurram Khan (Guy Rolfe), at left, who is the leader of the Afriidi rebellion, greets his childhood friend, Captain King (Tyrone Power).







COMMANDANT MAITLAND  
(Michael Rennie), right, in-  
troduces his daughter, Susan  
(Terry Moore), to Lieut-  
enant Heath (John Justin).



ABOVE: Dress parade of Scot-  
tish pipers of the British garri-  
son at Peshawar, in this color-  
ful scene from the stirring adven-  
ture "King of the Khyber Rifles."

RIGHT: Lieut. Heath (John Jus-  
tin) arrives in the nick of time  
to rescue his superior officer and  
headstrong English girl Susan  
Maitland from death in the desert.





# Top British film star visits Sydney

## Hawkins charms at fast-moving session

By our film critic, M. J. McMAHON

Would you recognise a film star if you saw one emerging from an overseas airliner in the early morning? It isn't easy.

But my guess is that Australian film fans would manage to spot Jack Hawkins, British filmdom's top male star, without much trouble.

**O**FF-SCREEN the 44-year-old actor looks exactly as millions of moviegoers know him—a sturdy figure, dark-haired, and attractive in a battered sort of way.

However, five minutes' conversation with him suggests that there are differences between his on-screen and off-screen personalities.

Hawkins, with fellow actor Noel Purcell, dancer Laya Raki, and a party of 15 movie people, recently passed through Sydney by air to New Zealand, where outdoor sequences for the new British film, "The Seekers," are being shot.

Jack Hawkins made the grade by playing strong, taciturn characters on the screen, but in reality he is easy to talk to and very charming.

He combines the ruggedness of a stern man with sympathy and human understanding.

A habit of making star pieces out of the true-to-life types of people he usually plays is the main ingredient in Hawkins' immense box-office appeal.

British commanding officer roles like the R.A.F. chief in "Angels One Five" and the corvette skipper of his hit film "The Cruel Sea," which is now screening in Australia, are his forte.

Off-screen Hawkins is urbane, an amusing conversationalist, and has quick laughter.

Women will approve his smooth manners and unobtrusive English charm.

During his first appearance before the Press in Australia, Jack Hawkins put on a show of affability that was never expected of him. He even managed to convey the impression of enjoying himself.

Good-humored and wry, and broadly gagging by turns, he dealt for nearly two hours with questions like these:

"When will 'The Seekers' be released?"

"Is it to be a Royal Command film?"

"Do you intend to come back to Australia?"

"What do you consider your best film role?"

On the sidelines, beetle-browed Noel Purcell, an Irish-



man with a personality to match his rich brogue, stole some of the limelight.

Mr. Purcell is very talkative. He rarely stops. And he's most amusing.

Dressed in a summerweight, light gabardine suit with a spotted necktie, from the collar down he looked like a prosperous Californian.

Above it a luxuriant grey beard and Burt Lancaster haircut gave him a rakish appearance.

I asked Purcell, 6ft. 3in. tall

and a veteran, "Why the crew cut?"

He screwed up his face. "Tis no crew cut at all," he scolded. "Tis me own hair growin' back after being shaved as bald as the back of your hand."

In England his head had been shaved and he wore a wig for his part as an early seaman in scenes of "The Seekers" that were filmed there.

Hero Jack Hawkins cherishes a curly, byronic mane for his part in the film.

**BRITISH** film star Jack Hawkins photographed with dancer Laya Raki and character actor Noel Purcell at Rose Bay, Sydney. They were about to leave on the last leg of the 13,000-mile London-Auckland flight.

Picking up one of numerous cups of coffee which he never managed to empty, Hawkins told me in that mellow voice that you know so well on the screen, "Oh, yes, I'm very keen to come back to Australia. I'm looking forward to seeing something of the country on the way home."

His idea is to spend some time with relatives who live in the Sydney suburb of Balgowlah and to try his hand at surf fishing.

In answer to a question about playing the hero of an early adventure yarn, Hawkins put joking aside before replying.

"Since the war I've made some interesting pictures and I've enjoyed making them," he said.

"Some more than others, naturally. I got most kick out of playing Ericson (of 'The Cruel Sea')."

"An actor needs change."

"There's ample scope in 'The Seekers,'" he pointed out. "You know, pioneer stuff with tons of character. The story is more history than Hollywood, and there is also strong romantic interest."

In his new picture Hawkins portrays an English seaman who blazes the trail towards amicable relationships between Maori chieftains and white settlers.

Glynis Johns, of the husky voice and tip-tilted nose, plays his wife. Glynis, with other commitments to meet in England, is not a member of the location unit.

Sultry-looking Laya Raki is a Maori maiden who catches the hero's eye.

A cabaret dancer from Cologne, she was originally a "discovery" of phony actors' agent Major Michael Howard, who promised to make her a film star.

Stranded in London when so-called Major Howard went marching off to prison for seven years for a long list of swindles, Raki was taken up by British film-makers.

Spectators did a double-take when Raki appeared on the scene, sleek as a seal in a tight white suit with a nipped-in jacket, her straight, black hair swinging half-way down her back.

An exponent of exotic dances of the simious, hip-swaying type, Raki has appeared in several German pictures, but hasn't done much acting before.

She speaks English haltingly with a strong, broken accent.

And here's where the English insistence on authenticity breaks down. How will the Maoris take to the idea of a half-German, half-Japanese girl playing the lead role as one of their own people?

Pinewood's publicists explain it in this way. "Laya has a strong Polynesian cast of feature. We had tested several Maori girls—some of them beautiful—but somehow the cameras didn't take to them. You know how people photograph differently from the way they really look . . ."

"Well, when we stumbled across Laya Raki and tested her, she photographed ideally for the part. She looks more like a Maori than a Maori."

Jack Hawkins may or may not return to Australia. If he does, filmgoers will probably have the chance to see him make a personal appearance on a Sydney stage.

In any case, I have an autographed tin of Frankfurter Würstchen (sausage to the unenlightened) to show that Jack Hawkins and Noel Purcell stopped here.

### CITY FILM GUIDE

**MAJESTIC.**—★ "Military Policemen," comedy, starring Bob Hope, Mickey Rooney, Marilyn Maxwell. (Release). Plus ★ "The Redhead and the Cowboy," Western, starring Rhonda Fleming, Glenn Ford.

**METRO.**—★★★ "The Band Wagon," technicalolor musical, starring Fred Astaire, Jack Buchanan, Cyd Charisse. (See review this page.) Plus featurettes.

**REGENT.**—★★ "The Robe," technicalolor Biblical drama in Cinemascope, starring Richard Burton, Jean Simmons, Victor Mature.

**REX.**—★ "The Silver Whip," Western, starring Dale Robertson, Robert Wagner. Plus "Untamed Women," adventure, starring Mikel Conrad. (February 2, 3, 4: ★ "I'll Get By," technicalolor musical, starring William Lundigan, June Haver. Plus ★★ "Boomerang," murder mystery, starring Dana Andrews, Jane Wyatt.) All releases.

**ST. JAMES.**—★ "Plunder of the Sun," adventure drama, starring Glenn Ford, Diana Lynn, Patricia Medina. (See review this page.) Plus ★ "Lady Godiva Rides Again," comedy, starring Stanley Holloway, Dennis Price.

**TIVOLI.**—"Blackmailed," drama, starring Dick Bogarde, Mai Zetterling. (Not yet reviewed.) Plus "I Believe in You," drama, starring Celia Johnson, Cecil Parker, Joan Collins. (Not yet reviewed.)

**WINTERGARDEN.**—★★★ "Shane," technicalolor Western, starring Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Van Heflin. Plus featurettes.

McClory) to uncover ancient loot.

Through flashbacks, film action touches on murder, mayhem, and smuggling but misses out on suspense.

Less tight-lipped than usual, Glenn Ford takes himself very seriously as the bystander who is embroiled in these goings-on.

Diana Lynn and Patricia Medina bring glamor and some mystery to the scene.

A predatory type, Diana Lynn divides her time between making unsuccessful passes at the hero and tossing off glasses of champagne.

Patricia also comes in for a fair share of knock-backs at his hands.

Shots in and around Oaxaca, Mexico, and the Zapotecan ruins nearby hold interest whenever cameras venture out of doors.

In Brisbane—St. James.

## Talking of Films

★★★ **The Band Wagon**  
**METRO'S** "The Band Wagon" is a big splashy musical that is packed with old tunes, bright dialogue, and audience appeal.

Telling satirical touches have been introduced into the stock Broadway story, in which song-and-dance routines are loosely woven around a flimsy romantic plot.

Two veteran musical stars—nimble Fred Astaire and English Jack Buchanan—are the butt of the film's light satire.

Astaire plays the part of an ageing topline who is eager to make a Broadway musical to bolster his waning popularity.

Debonair as ever, Buchanan is grand in the role of an arty actor-manager-producer who turns Astaire's musical comedy into a travesty of "Faust."

Revolving round these two are some first-class talents. Beautiful ballerina Cyd Charisse proves to be a good partner for Fred Astaire. Oscar Levant is in customary wry form, and bright-faced newcomer Nanette Fabray from

### OUR FILM GRADINGS

★★★★ Excellent

★★★ Above average

★★ Average

No stars—below average or not yet reviewed.

Broadway is thoroughly engaging.

Tops among the 15 tunes which dot the film are "Triplets," a specialty sung by Astaire, Fabray, and Buchanan, and "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," to which Astaire and Buchanan perform a simple soft-shoe dance.

In Brisbane—Metro.

### ★ Plunder of the Sun

**WARNERS'** "Plunder of the Sun" is an excursion into adventure set against picturesque, sun-drenched temples and ruins in Old Mexico.

It tells the story of a two-fisted American (Glenn Ford) who is caught up in a scramble between an avid archaeologist (Francis L. Sullivan) and a ruthless treasure hunter (Sean





1. IMPROMPTU song by ex-G.I. Jerry Golding (Danny Thomas) with stage star Judy Lane (Peggy Lee) brings down the house. Jerry is flushed with success.



2. TOAST proposed by Cantor Golding (Eduard Franz), centre, to the day when his son succeeds him at the Sinai Temple shocks Jerry, whose heart is set on the theatre. He hesitates to tell his father about it.



3. SHOW BUSINESS absorbs Jerry, causing quarrel with his father. When Judy's musical flops, Jerry has a run of bad luck, but will not go home.



4. RECORDING made by Jerry with Judy's help wins applause. A new backer promises to star them in a show, but when this plan falls down at last moment Jerry thinks he is to blame and leaves for home.



5. SURPRISED to find Judy on the train, Jerry and his Uncle Louis (Alex Gerry) take her home with them. They receive a warm welcome.

## The Jazz Singer

★ In Warners' new technicolor version of "The Jazz Singer" comedian Danny Thomas plays the role Al Jolson made famous in 1927. The story is about a son who cannot fulfil his father's wish that he become a seventh-generation cantor in a synagogue because his heart is in show business. The film offers a generous score of popular music. In her first feature film lead, singer Peggy Lee plays a musical-comedy star who loves the cantor's son.



6. BITTERNESS splits family again despite efforts of sympathetic Mrs. Golding (Mildred Dunnoek) to prevent it. Jerry leaves home and, with Judy, begins to get good stage breaks.



7. VISIT by his mother is joyous event for the now successful Jerry and Judy, who plan to marry. Soon after, Jerry is summoned home to his father's sick-bed. He is keen to heal breach.



8. RECONCILIATION with Cantor Golding is complete when Jerry, at his own request, sings at a Temple service. Afterwards he returns to show business with his father's blessing.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — February 3, 1954

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# OUR HAPPY MARRIAGE CONTEST

Continued from page 17

£50 — Section 1

**H**AVING observed many marriages pull themselves from nervous immaturity to a solid security, it seems to me that the best of them had one great thing in common—work!

Yes, plenty of work, gladly and competently done by both, so that it seems less like work than simply part of the good scheme of life. Not ever-ending drudgery, but the practical acceptance of everyday chores without all the fuss and useless sighing which so often stales companionship.

A good marriage is built by thinking in positive terms and by taking time to observe and care for each other.

There must be no foolish lining about a man's lot or a woman's lot, for both sexes have their difficulties and it is true that we can talk ourselves into and out of many of them.

Be friendly and get into the habit of smiling. If you have a grudge, end it quickly and have done with it, and when you are happy, let it show, don't hide it away.

Gratitude for ordinary comforts—for warm beds, good food, flowers in the garden, and joy in children—these things raise a marriage and make it sweet and wholesome.

They sound old-fashioned. They are, but so is marriage.

Mrs. Marguerite Smith, 122 High Street, Iwerell, N.S.W.

£25 — Section 1

**I**S your Married-Happiness radiantly happy?

You rate congratulations, not advice, so stop reading.

Hereunder is a guaranteed remedy for any slightly or desperately sick marriage; unless it's doomed. Make a solemn pact to take a dose whenever necessary. Be warned—it's strong medicine. Ready?

Stop and think, not lightly but with your hearts—"He/She could die today. Heart, hemorrhage, accident! He/She could." Ice will grip your hearts.

Then in will rush tenderness and memories—the church, the stinging sweetness of marriage vows.

The threat simply won't be there any more. The Romans had it: "Amor omnia vincit."

Take another dose any and every time you need it. You'll be amazed at the medicine's potency. It penetrates every corner of your living. It gets you at your spiritual level. It works into the most ordinary everyday affairs as a tonic.

It is a habit-forming medicine in that it forms the habit of behaving always so that you won't need to recourse to it.

Morbid? Living your lives in the shadow of death. Your marriage is sick indeed.

Of course it probably won't happen (what are the odds against sudden death?), but it could, and loneliness is bad enough without regrets. Some wise person said "Flowers for the living."

Mrs. L. L. Newton, 79 Knight St., Shepparton, Vic.

£50 — Section 2

**Y**OUR wife is a house-cleaning and laundry service, cook, commissionary, nurse, counsellor, hostess, and sock-darner. All this and a Lost and Found Department, too. If paid award wages she would be worth hundreds of pounds a year to you.

Treat her with the same respect and civility and considered judgment as you would a valued employee. True she won't quit if you yell at her, but she would appreciate some of the tact, diplomacy, and charm you use at the office.

See that she has pocket money. "Housekeeping" is a foul word which covers everything from a school notebook to a pair of half-soles.

Your wife needs, loves and has faith in you that will help move mountains. Have faith in her and be faithful to her. Your wife, your family, and your paramour suffer over an extra-marital relationship and you pay in pangs of your own guilty conscience. The loss of your wife's faith alone makes the cost too high. And you are not clever enough to deceive her!

Your wife is the girl you married. She still likes smart clothes and going places. If you can't give them to her, a kiss that says "I love you" will do. She is fatter or thinner—most certainly older—maybe a bit dull. And don't think you are still the same handsome, carefree dog you used to be. Dull husbands make dull wives.

Mrs. R. O. C. King, 14 East St., Ipswich, Qld.

£25 — Section 2

**M**OST husbands consider they are long-suffering. So do most wives, so here goes.

One of the most important factors in a successful marriage is courtesy. It embraces kindness, consideration, and love.

G. K. Chesterton says: "Of courtesy, it is much less Than courage of heart, or gentleness."

Yet in my walk it seems to me, That the grace of God is in—Courtesy."

You married your wife, and her faults, because you loved her. Don't try to perfect her once she's yours. If something irritates you, tell her in private. She will appreciate it, if you are tactful.

When children come, help her keep alive her interest in topical events and in her appearance. Many women feel that with the advent of children they retire to being just mothers. Remind her she has you, too. Children are a joy to be shared.

Get a reliable relative or baby-sitter occasionally. Take your wife out and make her feel she is the most important being in the world to you, now and always. Discuss things with her. Respect her advice when it's good. Let her know you're always there. Your strength is hers.

Be firm when it's necessary, but be gentle, and you'll be a perfect husband and, above all, a happy man with a tranquil home, and your wife will love you always.

Mrs. Pat Dougherty, Centre St., South Casino, N.S.W.

£50 — Section 3

**W**E made very solemn promises to each other when we took our marriage vows. Those promises form the foundation of our married life. Wives and husbands would do well to read them over to mentally read-just their standards.

Now let us be more specific. You are exhorted regularly to keep yourself "Lovely and lovable for him."

Do so by all means, and we appreciate your efforts, but don't worry yourself into a neurotic state because of the signs of advancing years. We know it hasn't been easy to rear a family on a limited budget, but we have both shared the struggle and hasn't it brought us closer?

Beware of this insidious wrecker of marriages—it is a house. Naturally you want to have the most modern house possible—and we will help you to make it and keep it so; but a house is not a home. Don't become so engrossed with all the furnishings and trappings that there is no time for relaxation with Dad and the kids.

How many husbands have wished they lived in a mia-mia rather than face that inevitable "flap" when friends are coming, or aren't game to bring in a cobber unexpectedly because of the "reaction" later.

Wives, please rule your house, don't let it rule you—fill it with love and sympathy and have it resting on the basic qualities mentioned and it will become a "home"—the care of a happy, successful, and enduring marriage.

Mr. J. F. Stewart, 68 Empress Rd., Surrey Hills, Vic.

£25 — Section 3

**T**HE best advice I can offer to wives is to realise and utilise the golden opportunity which marriage provides for satisfying the things which make for real happiness—love, security, motherhood, family life.

The need to love and be loved is fundamental and universal. You can express love in many forms—goodwill, friendship, companionship, devotion, sexual relationship.

You have come a long way since grandma's day. You have freedom and near-equality with man. But your emotional needs are unchanged. And you need motherhood, which is without doubt the most satisfying creative experience of all.

The family revolves around you; your influence is profound and lasting. Run your home smoothly, budget within your means, furnish your house with comfort and taste.

On your shoulders falls the main share of the care of your children. Guide them gently through their emotional and mental growth.

Don't attempt to mould them to a set pattern, but foster their interests and remain sensitive to their individual needs. You will find a wealth of contentment in the difficult task.

Marriage is a partnership of the most intimate kind. Physical, of course. But if in the course of the years it becomes an intimacy more of the mind and spirit than of the body, then this is surely the measure of its success.

Mr. Harold McCorkill, 97 Hodgkinson St., Clifton Hill, Vic.

## Suffered from Indigestion

"... now able to eat anything I like"

A man feels strongly before he writes the kind of letter we received from Mr. A. K. of Victoria. For 20 years he had endured acute indigestion. Nothing gave him relief until he was introduced to De Witt's Antacid Powder. That was in 1937. Then he found wonderful relief which amazed him (his own words then). But the true test of a medicine is its power to give continued relief. Did Mr. A. K. get that? Has he good cause to remain equally enthusiastic to-day about the medicine that was so wonderfully effective when he tried it first? His wife says "Yes". Read his letter—and hers. They know beyond doubt where to turn for lasting relief from those digestive upsets which crop up sometimes, even in the fittest of families.

**HE SAID THEN** in a letter dated 7th July, 1937.

"Just a line to tell you what wonderful relief I have had from your Antacid Powder. About 18 months ago I almost had to give up my work. For 20 years I had suffered and was never able to eat any of the things I liked best unless I suffered for it. I tried £'s worth of medicines

but nothing gave me relief until one day, while visiting a friend, he received one of the samples of Antacid Powder and he gave it to me. After trying it I was amazed with the result and am now able to eat anything I like and I have regained the weight I lost.

Yours with gratitude."

—signed A.K., Diamond Creek, Victoria.

**HIS WIFE SAYS NOW** in a letter dated 7th June, 1953.

"My husband has asked me to write and tell you he is enjoying much better health and still has the greatest faith in your Antacid Powder, which he finds gives him great relief after meals."

—signed R.K., Diamond Creek, Victoria (for her husband).

(The originals of these letters can be seen at our Melbourne Office)

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY - February 3, 1954

# Continuing . . . . Detection Unlimited

(from page 35)

to look at them, but if you take them from the common they're down every rabbit-hole."

Mr. Drybeck, schooling his features to an expression of spurious interest, said: "Really?" and tried unavailingly to think of something to add to this unencouraging response. Fortunately, they had reached the first of the shops, which combined groceries with haberdashery and stationery, and also harbored the Post Office, and a diversion was created by the emergence from its portals of Miss Miriam Patterdale, vigorously affixing a stamp to a postcard.

She accorded them a curt nod, and thrust the card into the letter-box, saying cryptically: "That's to the laundry! We shall see what excuse they can think up this time. I suppose you're going to the Haswells? You'll find Abby there. I'm told she plays quite a good game."

"Very creditable indeed," agreed Mr. Drybeck. "A strong backhand, unusual in one of her sex."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Patterdale, disposing of this without compunction. "Time you stopped talking like an Edwardian, Thaddeus. No patience with it!"

"I fear," said Mr. Drybeck, with a thin smile, "that I am quite an old fogey."

"Nothing to be proud of in that," said Miss Patterdale, correctly divining his attitude.

Mr. Drybeck was silenced. He had known Miss Patterdale for a number of years, but she had never lost her power to intimidate him. She was a weatherbeaten spinster of angular outline and sharp features. She invariably wore suits of severe cut, cropped her grey locks extremely short, and screwed a monocle into one eye. But this was misleading: her sight really was irregular.

She was the elder daughter of the last vicar of the parish, and upon his death, some ten years previously, she had moved from the vicarage to the cottage at the corner of Fox Lane, from which humble abode she still exercised a ruthless but beneficent tyranny over the present incumbent's parishioners.

Since the Reverend Anthony Cliburn's wife was of a shy and retiring nature, only too thankful to have her responsibilities wrested from her by a more forceful hand, not the smallest unpleasantness had ever arisen between the ladies. Mrs. Cliburn was frequently heard to say that she didn't

know what any of them would do without Miriam; and Miss Patterdale, responding to this tribute, asserted in a very handsome spirit, that although Edith hadn't an ounce of commonsense or moral courage she did her best, and always meant well.

"Are we to have the pleasure of seeing you at the Cedars, Miss Patterdale?" asked the Major, breaking an uncomfortable silence.

"No, my dear man, you are not. I don't play tennis—never did—and if there's one thing I bar it's watching country-house games. Besides, someone's got to milk the goats."

"It's a curious thing," said the Major, "but try as I will I can't like goats' milk. My wife occasionally used it during the war years, but I never acquired a liking for it."

"It would have been more curious if you had. Filthy stuff!" said Miss Patterdale candidly. "The villagers think it's good for their children: that's why I keep the brutes. Oh, well! There's a lot of nonsense talked about children nowadays: the truth is that they thrive on any muck."

Upon which trenchant remark she favored them with another of her curt nods, screwed her monocle more securely into place, and strode off down the street.

"Remarkable woman, that," observed the Major.

"Yes, indeed," responded Mr. Drybeck unenthusiastically.

"Extraordinarily pretty girl, that niece of hers. Not a bit like her, is she?"

"Her mother—Fanny Patterdale—that was—was always considered the better-looking of the sisters," said Mr. Drybeck repressively. "I fancy you were not acquainted with her."

"No, before my time," agreed the Major, realising that he had been put in his place by the Second Oldest Inhabitant, and submitting to it. "I'm a comparative newcomer, of course."

"Hardly that, Midgeholme," said Mr. Drybeck, rewarding this humility as it deserved. "Compared to the Squire and me, and I suppose I should add, Plennmeller, perhaps you might be considered a newcomer. But the place has seen many changes of late years."

"And not all of them for the better," said the Major.

Mr. Drybeck sighed: "It is sometimes difficult to repress a wish that our little community

had not altered so sadly. I find myself remembering the days when the Brotherless owned the Cedars—not that I have anything to say in disparagement of the Haswells, very estimable people. I am sure, but not, it must be owned, quite like the Brotherless."

"Not at all, no," said the Major, in all sincerity. "Well, for one thing, the Brotherless never entertained, did they? I must say, I think the Haswells are a distinct acquisition to Thornden. Nice to see that fine old house put into good order again, too. But if you're thinking of the present owner of Fox House, why, there I'm with you! A very poor exchange for the Churnsikes, I've always held—and I'm not the only one of that opinion."

Mr. Drybeck looked pleased, but only said, in a mild voice: "Rather a fish out of water, poor Warrenby."

"I can't think what induced him to move out of the town," said the Major. "I should have said he was a good deal more in his element in the Milkinton Road than he'll ever be at Fox House. Not by any means a pukka sahib, as we used to say in the good old days. Ah, well! It takes all sorts to make a world, I suppose."

Mr. Drybeck agreed with this, but as though he found it a regrettable thing; and the two gentlemen walked on in meditative silence.

As they reached the corner of Wood Lane, Gavin Plennmeller came out of the gate set in the wall of Thornden House, and limped across the road towards them. He was a slight, dark young man, a little under thirty, with a quick, lively countenance, and a contraction in one leg, which had been caused by his having suffered from hip disease in his childhood.

It had precluded him from taking any very active part in the war, and was held, by the charitable, to account for the frequent acidity of his conversation. He had inherited Thornden House, together with what remained after excessive taxation, of a moderate fortune, from his half-brother rather more than a year previously, and was not felt to be a newcomer to the district.

He had been used to living in London, supplementing a small patrimony by writing detective stories, but he had visited Thornden at frequent intervals, generally remaining under his brother's roof until the combination of his mocking

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## "Mail orders accepted"

Many women order by mail. Some because distance prevents them from visiting shops. Some because commitments will not permit a trip to town at the time. But whatever the reason, wise women will enclose a "not negotiable" Bank of New South Wales cheque with the order—for paying by "Wales" cheque can ensure that the money is available only to the store concerned. Ask the Manager of your local "Wales" branch: he will be glad to tell you how the "Wales" can help you in this and many other ways.

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## ★ As I read the stars ★ By EVE HILLIARD ★

**ARIES** (March 21-April 20): If you're joining a club, February 2 starts a new season. The evening of February 4 may bring quarrels, but February 6 provides fascinating social opportunity and favors lovers.

**TAURUS** (April 21-May 20): Those who are starting a new job are likely to find February 3 hectic, but having got the hang of it by February 8 they'll be able to congratulate themselves.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21): An inspiration out of the blue may cause Gemini wings to soar, February 2. Keep going and others will follow you. The weekend should be glorious.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22): February 3 marks the start of new activities, which should be enjoyable and rewarding. February 7 is excellent for rest, relaxation, or outings.

**LEO** (July 23-August 22): A business affair greatly to your advantage may shed a golden light over February 5; partnerships prosper in any direction, February 8.

**VIRGO** (August 23-September 23): You will have more on the agenda, February 2, than you can possibly manage, but you'll report progress and find February 4 full of rosy prospects.

**LIBRA** (September 24-October 23): The evening of February 3 holds romance for the young and impressionable. February 8 inclines towards extra money or luck in a matter of chance.

**SCORPIO** (October 24-November 22): Do people let you down or is your morale sagging, February 4? Look forward to a happy weekend; when several ships come into port.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 23-December 20): You may start off with a marvellous idea, February 3, encounter a tough obstacle, February 5, but conclude your enterprise happily, February 7.

**CAPRICORN** (December 21-January 19): Maybe you have an accounting, February 3, and find you're in the red. February 5 is fine for budgeting or a bit of extra money.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20-February 19): Young or old, February 6 is fortunate for your particular field of interests. Personal happiness is high.

**PISCES** (February 20-March 20): Should you be discouraged, February 2, February 4 is radiant with fresh projects. Further developments may be expected, February 7.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatever for the statements contained in it.]



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# At last I'm free to look after my little family— thanks to Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids



## This human story will interest many sufferers who should be enjoying radiant health

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—as they helped this young mother and her family. There is the story of thousands of other Australians. Rheumatism, Backache, Sciatica, Lumbago, Stiffness in muscles and joints, Kidney and Bladder Weakness, Dizziness, Headaches and Simple High Blood Pressure are so common to-day that these and kindred ailments cost Australians approximately \$25,000,000 a year. Much suffering and loss can be ended by helping your bloodstream to wash away crippling everyday poisons with a course of Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids.

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Continuing . . . .

tongue and Walter's nerve-racked irritability resulted in an inevitable quarrel—if a situation could be called a quarrel in which one man exploded with exasperation and the other laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

Walter had taken an all too active part in the war, and had emerged from it in a condition nearly resembling a mental and physical wreck, his temper uncertain, and his strength no more than would allow him to pursue, in a spasmodic way, his old, passionate hobbies of entomology and bird-watching.

After each rift with Gavin he had sworn never to have the young waster in the house again; but when Gavin, wholly impervious to insult, once more arrived on his doorstep he invariably admitted him, and even, for several days, enjoyed his companionship. His indifferent health made him disinclined to seek society, and few really regretted the change of ownership.

Gavin was not popular, for he took no trouble to conceal his conviction that he was cleverer than his neighbors; but he was less disliked than his brother had been.

The two elder men waited for him to come up with them. "Coming to the Cedars?" the Major asked.

"Yes, do you think it odd of me? I expect I shall play croquet. Mrs. Haswell is sure to ask me to see her such a kind disposition!"

"A game of considerable skill," remarked Mr. Drybeck. "It has gone out of fashion of late years, but in my young days it was very popular. I remember my grandmother telling me, however, that when it first came in it was frowned on as being fast, and leading to flirtation. Amusing!"

"I can't fight with Mrs. Haswell," she remarks me with a motherly eye. Or with Mavis Warrenby; her eyes glisten, and she knows I don't mean the dreadful things I say. Besides her uncle might take it to mean encouragement of himself, and that would never do. He would force his way into my house, and I'm resolved that it shall be the one threshold he can't cross."

"Oh, yours won't be the only one!" said the Major, chuckling a little. "Eh, Drybeck?"

"No, you're quite mistaken, Major," Plennmeller retorted. "Warrenby will cross Mr. Drybeck's threshold by a ruse. He will simulate a fit at his gate, or beg to be allowed to come in to recover from an attack of giddiness, and Mr. Drybeck will be too polite to refuse him. That's the worst of having been born in the last century; you're always being frustrated by your upbringing."

"I trust," said Mr. Drybeck frostily, "that I should not refuse admittance to anyone in such need of assistance as you indicate."

"You mean you trust you won't be home when it happens, because your fear of appearing to the rest of us to be callous might prove stronger than your disinclination to render the least assistance to Warrenby."

"Really, Plennmeller, that borders on the offensive!" protested the Major, perceiving that Mr. Drybeck had taken umbrage at it.

"Not at all. It was merely the truth."

The Major could think of nothing to say to this. Mr. Drybeck gave a laugh that indicated annoyance rather than amusement, and said: "You will forgive me, Plennmeller, if I say that the truth in this instance is that Warrenby's presence in our midst does not occupy my mind as it seems to occupy yours. My feeling in the matter is one of indifference."

The Major glanced uneasily

# Detection Unlimited

[from page 41]

at Gavin, fearing that it could scarcely have escaped his acute perception that Mr. Drybeck's loathing of his rival and neighbor was fast approaching the proportions of monomania. But Gavin only said, with a flicker of his unkind smile: "Oh, I do so much admire that attitude! I should adopt it myself, if I thought I could carry it off. I couldn't, of course; you would have to be a Victorian for that."

"Now, now, that's enough about Victorians!" interrupted the Major. "Next, you'll be calling me a Victorian!"

"No, you have never laid claim to the distinction."

"I am not ashamed of it," stated Mr. Drybeck.

"How should you be? The Squire isn't. By what means, do you suppose, did Warrenby obtain a foothold in Old Place? The Ainstables do receive him, you know. I find that to surprising: I'm sure they wouldn't receive me if I weren't a Plennmeller. Do you think Sampson Warrenby employed devilish wiles to induce the Squire to include him on his visiting list, or are we all equal, seen from the Olympian heights of Old Place? What a corroborating suspicion! I can hardly bear it."

The Major could only be thankful that they had by this time reached the front gates of the Cedars.

MR. HENRY HASWELL, who had bought the Cedars from Sir James Brotherlee, was one of the more affluent members of the county. His grandfather had founded a small estate agent's business in Bellingham. His father, William Haswell, made the firm important, and himself a force to be reckoned with in civic affairs. He penetrated into society, which his father did not doubt was out of his own reach; contracted an advantageous marriage; and presently sent his son Henry to Winchester and to New College.

Sticklers who had looked askance at William accepted Henry as a matter of course. He knew the right people, wore the right clothes, and held the right beliefs; and, since he was an unaffected person, he did not pretend to despise the prosperous business which had made it possible for him to acquire all these advantages, and he always found time to promote charitable schemes, sit on the board of the local hospital, and hunt at least once a week.

Henry Haswell sent his only son to Winchester and Oxford, not because he hoped for his social advancement, but because it was the natural thing to do; and, although he would not have opposed any desire on Charles' part to abandon the estate agency for one of the more exalted professions, he would have felt a good deal of secret disappointment had Charles not wished to succeed him.

But Charles, born into an age of dwindling capital and vanishing social distinctions, never expressed any such desire; he knew himself to be fortunate to have a sound business to step into, and felt a good deal of pride in its high standing. He had just been made a full partner in the firm, and his mother had begun to tell her friends, but without conviction, that it was time he was thinking of getting married.

Henry Haswell had bought the Cedars in a dilapidated condition from the last surviving member of a very old county family, and to such persons as Thaddeus Drybeck it was ironic and faintly displeasing that he should have set it in order, and done away with all the

hideous anachronisms (including a conservatory built to lead out of the drawing-room) with which the Brotherlees had disfigured it.

It was now a house of quiet distinction, furnished in excellent taste, and set in a garden which had become, thanks to Mrs. Haswell's fanatical and tireless efforts, one of the loveliest in the county.

As the three men entered the gates and walked up the drive towards the house they saw her approaching from the direction of the tennis courts, a single salmon-pink poppy in her hand.

"How nice!" she greeted them. "Now I can arrange a second four! How do you do, Major? How are you, Gavin? I was just thinking of you, Mr. Drybeck; how right you are not to keep cats. I don't know why it is that one can train dogs to keep off the flower-beds, but never cats. Just look at this! The wretched creature must have lain on the plant, I should think. Isn't it a shame? Do you mind coming through the house? Then I can put this poor thing in water."

Talking all the way, in her gently amiable fashion, she led them into the cool, square hall. She was a stout woman, with grey hair, and clothes of indeterminate style and color, betraying no sign in her person of the unerring taste she showed in house decoration and the arrangement of herbaceous borders.

Inserting the broken poppy into a bowl of flowers in a seemingly haphazard manner which yet in no way impaired the symmetry of the bowl, she passed on into a sunny, drawing-room, where, out in the side wall, a glass-panelled door gave access to the rose garden, which led in turn to the tennis courts.

"Charles and Abigail Dearham are playing the Lindales," she said as they went along, "but the vicar and Mavis Warrenby have arrived, so we shall be able to get up a second set."

"Splendid!" said the Major.

Mr. Drybeck said nothing. He foresaw that it would fall to his lot to have Mavis Warrenby for his partner, since he was a better player than the vicar or the Major, and the prospect depressed him.

"Your husband not playing, Mrs. Haswell?" asked the Major.

"No, so unfortunate! Henry has had to go over to Woodhall," replied Mrs. Haswell.

Mr. Drybeck's depression became tinged by a slight feeling of affront. Henry Haswell was the only tennis player in Thorneden whom he considered worthy of his steel, and he had been looking forward to a game with him.

They had by this time come within sight of the two hard courts which Mrs. Haswell had insisted must be placed where they would not mar the beauty of her garden. They had been laid out accordingly at some distance from the house, and they backed on to the wall which shut the grounds of the Cedars off from the footpath running from the northern Hawkhead road past the squire's plantations, directly south to Fox Lane, separated from it by a stile.

At this point, the path, skirting the spinney belonging to the Cedars, turned sharply westward until it met Wood Lane, immediately south of the Cedars' front gates. A gate set in the wall close to the tennis courts gave access to the footpath.

It was through this gate that the Lindales, who lived on the Hawkhead - Bellingham road, had come to the party. Mavis Warrenby and Abigail Dearham had also used it, none

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — February 3, 1954

Continuing . . . .

## Detection Unlimited

[from page 42]

of these persons being so punctilious in the use of front entrances as Mr. Drybeck.

When Mrs. Haswell led the three men up to the courts only one was being used. A cheerful and hard-fought set was in progress between Charles Haswell, the son of the house, and Miss Paternale's niece, Abigail Dearham, on the one side, and the Lindales, a young married couple, on the other; while the vicar, a tall, bony man with a gentle countenance and grizzled hair receding from a broad brow, engaged Mavis Warrenby in desultory conversation on a garden seat behind the court.

"Well, I don't have to introduce any of you," said Mrs. Haswell, smiling generally upon her guests. "Or ask you what sort of games you play, which is such a comfort, because no one ever answers truthfully. Mavis, I think you and Mr. Drybeck ought to take on the vicar and Major Midgeholme."

"I'm not nearly good enough to play with Mr. Drybeck," protested Mavis, with what that gentleman privately considered perfect truth. "I shall be dreadfully nervous. I'm sure they'd much rather have a men's four."

"Not, I imagine, if you are suggesting I should make the fourth," interpolated Gavin, throwing her into confusion and watching the result with the eye of a connoisseur.

"They will be able to make up a men's four later," said Mrs. Haswell, quite unperturbed. "I'm sure you'll play very nicely, my dear. It's a pity your uncle couldn't come."

"Yes, he was so very sorry," said Mavis, her face still suffused with color. "But some papers have come in which he said he simply must deal with. So he made me come alone, and make his excuses. I don't feel I ought really to be here."

"Yes, dear, you told me," said her hostess kindly. "We're all very glad you have come."

Miss Warrenby looked grateful, but said: "I don't like leaving uncle to get his own tea. Saturday is Gladys' half-day, you know, so he's alone in the house. But he wouldn't hear of letting me stay at home to look after him, so I just put the tray ready and the kettle on the stove and ran off to enjoy myself. But I do feel a little bit guilty, because uncle hates having to do that sort of thing for himself. However, he said he didn't mind for once in a way, so here I am. It was really awfully kind of him."

Her pale grey eyes hopefully scanned the circle, but this recorded instance of Sampson Warrenby's consideration for his niece failed to elicit comment from anyone but Mrs. Haswell, who merely said: "It won't hurt your uncle to get his own tea. I shouldn't worry about him, if I were you."

She then handed Mr. Drybeck a box of tennis balls, saw all four players pass through the wire gate on to the court, then sat down on the garden seat, inviting Gavin to join her there.

"It's a pity Mrs. Cliburn is late," she observed. "If she were here, they could have a proper mixed doubles, and it would make a more even game. However, it can't be helped. I'm glad Sampson Warrenby didn't come."

"You said you were not."

"Yes, of course; one does say that sort of thing. I had to ask him, because it would have looked so pointed if I'd left him out. You can't leave people out in a small community; it makes things awkward, as I told Henry."

"Oh, is that why he went to Woodhall?" asked Gavin interestedly.

"And if I left Mr. Warrenby out," pursued Mrs. Haswell, apparently deaf to this interruption, "I should be obliged to leave Mavis out, too, which I should be sorry to do."

"I wish you had left him out," she leads a wretched enough life without being ostracised," said Mrs. Haswell, still deaf. "And you never hear her say an unkind word about him."

"I never hear her say an unkind word about anyone. There is no affinity between us."

"I wonder what is keeping the Ainstables?"

"Possibly the fear that nothing has kept Warrenby."

"I'm sure I said half-past three. I hope Rosamund hasn't had another of her bad turns. There now, the young people have finished their set, and the others have only just begun theirs; I wanted to arrange it so that Mr. Drybeck should play with the good ones . . . Well, how did it end, my dears? Who won?"

"Oh, the children!" said Kenneth Lindale, with the flash of a rueful smile. "Delia and I were run off our feet!"

"You are a liar!" remarked Abigail Dearham, propping her rump against a chair, and picking up a scarlet cardigan.

"We should be still at it, if it hadn't been for Charles' almighty fluke."

"Less of it!" recommended the son of the house, walking over to a table which bore a phalanx of tumblers, and several kinds of liquid refreshment. "A brilliantly conceived shot, executed with true delicacy of touch. What'll you have, Delia? We can offer you lemonade, orangeade, beer, ginger-beer, and Mother's Ruin. You have only to give it a name."

Mrs. Lindale, having given it a name, sat down in a chair beside her hostess, her coat draped across her shoulders, and surreptitiously glanced at her wristwatch. She was a thin young woman, with pale hair, aquiline features, and ice-blue eyes that never seemed to settle on any object. She gave the impression of being strung up on wires, her mind always reaching forward to some care a little beyond the present.

Since her husband had abandoned a career on the Stock Exchange to attempt the precarious feat of farming, it was generally felt that she had every reason to look anxious. They had not been settled for very long at Rushford Farm, which lay to the north of Thornden, on the Hawksfield road, and those who knew most about the hazards of farming in England wondered for how long they would remain. Both were energetic, but neither was accustomed to country life; and for Delia at least the difficulties were enhanced by the existence of a year-old infant, on whom the lavished what older and more prosaic parents felt to be an inordinate amount of care and adoration.

Those who noticed her quick glance at her watch knew that she was wondering whether the woman who helped her in the house had remembered to carry out the minute instructions she had left for the care of the infant, or whether Rose-Veronica might not have been left to scream unheard in her pram. Her husband knew it, too, and, catching her eye, smiled at once comfortingly and teasingly.

Kenneth Lindale was a handsome, dark man, some few years his wife's senior. He had the ready laughter that often accompanies a quick temper, a pair of warm brown eyes and a lower lip that supported the upper in a way that gave a deal of resolution to his face. He and Delia were recognised

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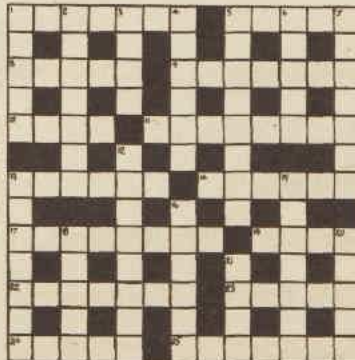
## THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Present chance is in India on the bank of the Ganges (7).
- Serpent in French is quivering (5).
- Tease by placing the end in the middle (5).
- This kind of acquaintance is very slight (7).
- Salute with a small piece of ice (4).
- Art spent in confusion in either arm of a cruciform church (8).
- The real name of this soldier Jesus was of Nazareth (6).
- Nazis, though its centre is lame (6).

- Brigands formed into a league have it both ways (8).
- Be a rodent and a child (4).
- Lizard with an outside motor (7).
- Contradiction of muscles with a short credit and a politician (9).
- No smell should escape this strong head wind (5).
- Bookies may not like this, but shopkeepers welcome a good one (7).

Solution will be published next week.



DOWN

- Tree with a curve (5).
- Unblased, a play by G.B.S. (7).
- Home for a bird in the subterranean station (4).
- It's cold to succeed before endeavor (6).
- Lead entry (ADART - 8).
- First of the seven deadly sins, mainly on horseback (5).
- Nullifies age within the nest (7).

- Be helpful with a clergyman (8).
- White of egg containing a blank book (7).
- A fishy woman? (7).
- Begins a party in a steamer (6).
- The day of March a week before Caesar was murdered (5).
- A pert broken candle (5).
- 4860 square yards (6).

A CROSSWORD  
DOFF A A E  
E PRETENDER  
REEL O E C M  
T A MEMSAHLS  
T C  
SPOILT STOGE  
R I O N  
CHYSALETR G  
U A A TEAR  
HERMAONTO  
C O S U ARES  
HAMSTRING E S

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as a devoted couple. His attitude towards her was protective; she, without seeming to be mentally dependent upon him, was so passionately absorbed in him that she could never give all her attention to anyone else if he were present.

Mrs. Haswell, who had seen her glance at her watch, gave her hand a pat and said, smiling: "Now, I'm not going to have you worrying over your baby, my dear! Mrs. Merton will look after her perfectly well."

Delia flushed, and gave an uncertain laugh. "I'm sorry! I didn't mean—I was only wondering."

Abigail Dearham, a very pretty girl, with a mop of dark curls and wide-open grey eyes, looked at her with the interest she accorded to everyone who came in her way.

"Have you got a baby?" she asked.

"Yes, a little girl. But I really wasn't worrying about her. That is to say—"

"Do you look after her yourself? Is it an awful sweat?"

"Oh, no! Of course, it does the one, but I love doing it."

"You ought to get out more, dear," said Mrs. Haswell.

"I expect it's fun having a baby," said Abby, giving the matter her serious consideration. "I shouldn't like to be tied down though."

"Yes, you would. You don't mind being tied down by your old ink," said Charles.

"That's different. I have sat hours with him."

"Not much you don't!" said Charles rudely. "You're always being kept on after hours because he's in the middle of a chapter or wants you to manage one of his beastly parties!"

His mother, not betraying the fact that she had received sudden enlightenment, said in an easy tone: "Abby is Geoffrey Silloth's secretary, Delia. So interesting!"

"No, by Jove, are you really?" said Kenelm. "What's he like?"

"Oh, quite a toot!" replied Abby cheerfully. "He's gone off to Antibes for a fortnight,

which is why I've got a holiday."

This description of a distinguished man of letters was received with equanimity by Mrs. Haswell, accustomed to the phraseology of youth; with complete understanding by Charles and the Lindales; and with patent nausea by Gavin Plennmeller, who asked in silken accents to have the term explained to him.

"Ah, here come Mrs. Cliburn and the Squire!" said Mrs. Haswell, rising to greet these timely arrivals. "Edith, how nice! But Bernard, isn't Rosamund coming?"

The Squire, a squarely built man who looked older than his sixty years, shook hands, saying: "One of her heads. She told me to make her apologies, and say she'd be along to tea. If she feels up to it. I don't think there's much hope of it, but I left the car for her, just in case."

"Oh, dear, I am sorry! You know Mrs. Lindale, don't you? And her husband, of course."

"Yes, indeed. Glad to see you, Mrs. Lindale. And you, Lindale." His deep-set eyes travelled to the tennis courts. "Warrenby not here? Good opportunity for the rest of us to talk over this business about the River Board. Where's Henry, Adelaide?"

"Well, I expect he'll be back before you leave," replied Mrs. Haswell. "Though if it's about this tiresome River Board affair I do wish—however, it's not my business, so you'd better talk to Henry. I must say it does seem a lot of fuss about very little."

"One does so want to avoid unpleasantness," said Mrs. Cliburn. "Of course, it isn't anything to do with us either, but Tony and I can't help feeling that it would be a shame to appoint anyone but Mr. Drybeck to act for this new River Board. I mean, he always did when it was the Catchment Board, didn't he? And he'd be bound to feel very badly about it, particularly if Mr. Warrenby were appointed instead of him."

But I oughtn't to give my opinion," she added hastily.

"Well, well, it isn't such a great matter, after all!" said the Squire. "We must see what Haswell thinks."

"Dad won't support Warrenby, sir," interpolated Charles. "I know that. For one thing, he's dead against hurting poor old Drybeck's feelings."

"Charles!" said his mother, with a warning glance towards the tennis court.

"All right, Mum! They can't hear us. And, for another, he's just about had Warrenby, quailing into everything here!"

"Nor is he alone in his surfeit," said Gavin. "I, too, shall oppose Warrenby. I feel sure Walter would have been always opposed people."

THE Squire threw Gavin a frowning look, but said nothing. Kenelm Lindale, lighting a cigarette and carefully pressing the spent match into the ground, said: "Well, I don't want to hurt Drybeck's feelings either, but to tell you the truth I don't know much about this River Board."

"And you a riparian owner!" said Charles, shocked. "There used to be one Catchment Board for the Rushby fure and another one for the Crail, which for your better information is—"

"All right!" said Kenelm, grinning at him. "I know where the Crail runs. I also know that two old Catchment Boards have become one new River Board. What I meant was, what about the Crail hall of the board? Haven't they got a candidate for the solicitor's job?"

"The man who used to look after their interests has retired," said the Squire shortly. "You'd better read the correspondence. I'll show it to you, if you like to—no, now I come to think of it. I sent it on to you, Gavin. I wish you'd let me have it back."

He turned away and began to talk to his hostess. Another game was soon arranged, he and Mrs. Cliburn taking the

places of Charles and Abigail, who went off with Gavin and Mrs. Haswell to engage in a lighthearted game of Crazy Croquet, which Charles insisted, was the only sort of croquet he understood.

Tea was served under the elm tree on the lawn to the east of the house, the tennis players joining the party when their respective sets ended, and hailing with acclaim the discovery that Mrs. Haswell, always a perfect hostess, had provided ice coffee for their refreshment.

The Squire's wife arrived at about half-past five, leaving her car in the drive, and walking through the rose-covered archway that led to the eastern lawn. Mrs. Haswell rose at once and went to meet her; and she said, in her rather high-pitched, inconsequent voice: "I do apologise! Don't say I'm too late to be given tea. I should burst into tears. Isn't it hot? How lovely the garden's looking. We've got green-fly."

"My dear, you don't look fit to be out!" said Mrs. Haswell, taking her hand, and looking at her in a concerned way. "Are you sure you're all right?"

"Oh, yes! Just one of my wretched heads. Better now. Don't say anything about it. Bernard worries so about me!"

This was seen to be true. The Squire had come up to them, and was anxiously scanning his wife's face. "My dear, is this wise of you? I hoped you'd have a sleep."

"I did have a sleep, Bernard, and it did me so much good that I couldn't bear to stay away from Adelaide's party. Now, don't fuss, darling, please!"

He shook his head, but said no more. Mrs. Haswell could not think it wonderful that he should be worried. Rosamund Ainstable, though more than ten years his junior, had never enjoyed good health. Her constitution was delicate; any exertion out of the way was apt

to prostrate her; and she was the victim of sick headaches whose cause had consistently baffled her many medical advisers.

In the popular phrase, she lived on her nerves. During the two world wars she had died a thousand vicarious deaths in the first—when she had known that every telegram delivered to her must contain the news that her husband had been killed in action—then had lost her only child in the second. Her friends had prophesied that she would not recover from this blow, but she had recovered, exerting herself to comfort the Squire whose pride and hope were buried somewhere in the North African Desert.

It might have been expected that he and she, with their son dead, would have ceased to struggle to maintain an estate impoverished by the financial demands of one war and brought almost to penury by those of a second, but as the Squire's legal adviser, Thaddeus Drybeck loyally pointed out to his acquaintances, blood told, and the Squire continued to plan and contrive as though he believed he would be succeeded by the son he had adored and not by a nephew whom he scarcely knew and did not much like.

Mrs. Haswell installed Mrs. Ainstable in a comfortable chair and supplied her with the tea for which she said she craved.

When all the strawberries had been eaten and all the ice coffee drunk, the vicar solved a problem which had been exercising Mrs. Haswell's mind for some time. He said that much as he would like to engage on further homeric struggles, duty called him, and he must away to pay a visit to a sick parishioner. This left only nine potential tennis players to be accommodated on two courts, and no one could doubt, as Gavin Plennmeller informed Kenelm Lindale under his breath, that Miss Warrenby would honestly prefer to watch.

He was quite right, but, judging by his expression, had scarcely foreseen the immediate sequel to this act of self-abnegation. When polite opposition had been overborne, Mrs. Haswell said: "You and Gavin must keep each other company then, Mavis, dear. Rosamund, I'm going to take you into the house; it's far too hot for you to be sitting outside."

Gavin gasped. He muttered, for Kenelm's ear: "This is where I must think fast. None of you who pity me for my disability have the least conception of the horrors to which I am subjected. I will not bear that afflictive girl company. Quick, what does A. do?"

"You can't do anything," said Kenelm, rather amused.

"You betray your ignorance of my character."

Kenelm laughed, but soon found that he had underrated Mr. Plennmeller's bland ingratitude. He now learned that Gavin was about to return to his home to fetch, for his perusal, the River Board correspondence, and he began to perceive why it was that Gavin was not popular with his neighbors.

"Oh, I'm sure you ought not to!" exclaimed Mavis, glancing reproachfully at Kenelm.

"But I am sure I ought. You could see the Squire was displeased with me. He felt I shouldn't have forgotten to return the papers, and I have a dreadful premonition that I shall go on forgetting."

"You needn't fetch them for my sake," interrupted Kenelm maliciously.

"No, for my own!" retorted Gavin, not in the least discomfited. "Something accomplished will earn me a night's repose. I rarely accomplish anything and never suffer from insomnia, but Miss Warrenby has often told me what an excellent maxim that is."

"Oh, yes, but all that way just for a few papers. Couldn't someone else go for you?" said Mavis. "I'm sure I'd like to, if you think I could find them."

Kenelm, who guessed that Gavin's mocking references to

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## The most hygienic method of washing up

### 'SENTINEL'

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This amazing new kitchen discovery at last is the perfect answer to doctors' requirements for precautions against food poisoning and germ carrying. There is no more hygienic way to wash up known.

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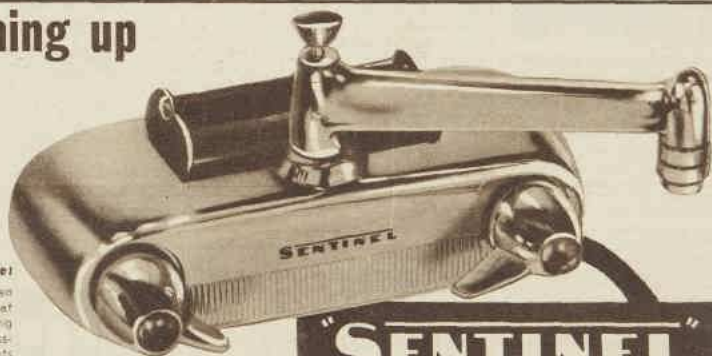
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DAFFODILS planted under trees in Wahroonga Park, N.S.W., have a charmingly informal look that makes them appear to be growing wild, as they do in the woods and fields of England. Daffodils also look beautiful in formal gardens.

## Golden daffodils

With care, thoughtful planning, and just a little money, it is easy to have a magnificent bulb garden in a few years, because, well treated, all the hardy types multiply quickly.

THERE are dozens of different spring bulbs, but it is pretty safe to say that daffodils are everyone's favorites.

Although they do best in the southern States or highlands, where the air is cool and the soil deep and moist, it is possible to grow fine daffodils in most parts of Australia except the tropic north.

Before buying bulbs look round and decide where to plant them for best effect.

They look wonderful alone, but they look just as wonderful planted against spring-flowering shrubs like Forsythia, under blossom trees, or massed with small perennials like the small campanulas, pinks, or other bulbs.

Daffodils look spectacular in a formal garden, but look more beautiful still growing as they would naturally—in grass under deciduous trees.

Among the most reliable types for the home gardener are the big golden King Alfred, Sir Watkin, which is ideal for informal planting, Barri conspicuous, and Leedsii.

Many of the beautiful newer varieties like Fortune, Renown, Golden Dawn, Golden City, and Hugh Poate should be included if the gardener can afford them.

The list of new varieties grows quickly and covers the familiar yellows and golds, as well as the creams, whites, and pinks.

In a formal garden the bulbs are planted in measured rows, and only one variety should be used, to make sure that they all flower together.

In the wild garden, the less planned the effect the better. One way to do this is to throw handfuls of bulbs and plant them where they fall.

Daffodils should be planted from early to mid-autumn to give them time to develop a big root growth before the shoots appear above ground. The site may be sunny or partially shady, but it must be well drained; if soggy or water-logged, the bulbs will rot.

The soil must be well prepared by digging it thoroughly and then enriching with compost or well-rotted animal manure. Daffodils do best in a heavy rich loam, and soil improvements should be aimed at achieving this.

Where the bulbs are being planted in rows, a slightly different method can be used with good results. After digging the soil and incorporating

### GARDENING

compost, small trenches can be dug on the bulb lines, each one being about five to six inches, which is about an inch deeper than bulb depth. Along either side of the trench base, sprinkle narrow bands of a complete fertiliser or blood and bone.

Cover this with an inch of fine soil and then plant the bulbs so that they are directly over the fertilised trench. Be careful that the bulb does not touch the fertiliser, or it may rot.

Whatever the planting plan, the bottom of the bulb should be about four to five inches from the surface — it varies slightly with size — and the bulbs should be four to five inches apart.

Take care that the bulb is pushed well into the soft, prepared soil, not suspended from the walls of a hole dug with a dibble. Finally cover the bulbs with soil and level the

ground, so that water won't collect in depressions.

It is hard to imagine a sight more beautiful than daffodils growing wild in the fields and woods of England and Wales. The same effect on a smaller scale can be had in Australia, provided the grass through which the bulbs will grow is a soft and slow grower. Buffalo, for instance, would present an impossible obstacle, but couch or, more especially, the bents are quite suitable.

The best way to plant daffodils so that they will look as though they are growing naturally is to dig out squares of turf and prepare the soil as thoroughly as possible in the way already described. After planting, replace the turf squares and flatten them with a spade.

The main thing is to keep the planting irregular and drift-like. Some light-growing deciduous trees will add greatly to the finished picture. To keep the natural look, mass the bulbs on one side of the trunks instead of distributing them evenly in a circle.

When planting daffodils in a natural setting, grass should not be mowed until the foliage has yellowed, because the leaves manufacture food needed to build up next year's bud.

Flower quality deteriorates slowly if bulbs are not lifted every three or four years. This should be done after the foliage has died down. During summer keep the bulbs spread out in single layers on trays, and put them in a cool, dry place.

The hardy, sweet-scented jonquils, which belong to the same family, can be grown in the same way as daffodils.

It would be a pity not to mention the charming campanelle. Like a tiny daffodil, with several flowers on one stem, this deep golden, pleasantly scented flower multiplies generously. It is the real spring herald and will sometimes bloom even in the middle of winter.



4/8/31, Jalandhar, PUNJAB, INDIA.

Dear Sir,—My aunt sent me a supply of your excellent teething powder, which she has used for her own children and grandchildren. I cannot be grateful enough to her for introducing me to them, as they are a veritable miracle worker and have been of infinite value to me during the teething days of my little daughter. Although teething in a hot climate is usually difficult, I have not had one disturbed night since I started giving her these powders and all feverishness and bowel troubles are also eliminated and a cheerful healthy child results.

As I do not want to be without the powders and as I should like also to supply my friends, I enclose a cheque for £1, with the request that you send me as many powders as can be sent by air for that money.

With grateful appreciation,  
(Signed) Mrs. P. M. FLETCHER.

Dear Sir,—Thank you for your prompt attention to my order. The powders arrived safely. They seem to have the same effectiveness in the case of ordinary stomach and digestive upsets as they do in teething troubles. Therefore in a country like this, where such ailments are frequent in spite of care and precautions, your powders are likely to be of immense value throughout childhood.

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(Signed) (Mrs.) P. M. FLETCHER.



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his lameness masked his loathing of it, was not surprised that this well-meant piece of tactlessness met with the treatment he privately thought it deserved.

"Does it seem to you a long way to my house? I thought it was only half a mile. Or are you thinking that my short leg pains me? Do let me set your mind at rest. It doesn't. You have been misled by my ungainliness."

He turned away, and went, with his uneven gait, to where his hostess was standing. Mavis said, sighing: "I often think it does hurt him, you know."

"He has told you that it doesn't," replied Kenelm, rather shortly.

She brought her eyes to bear on his face. "He's so plucky, isn't he? People don't realise what it must mean to him or make allowances."

Kenelm felt that he was being reproved for insensibility, and obeyed, with relief, a summons from Mrs. Haswell.

By the time Gavin returned

to the Cedars it was half-past six, and the party was beginning to break up. Mrs. Ainsdale was the first to leave, driving home alone in her aged little car, and very nearly running Gavin down as she came somewhat incautiously round the bend in the drive.

She pulled up, calling out: "So sorry! Did I frighten you?"

"Yes, I gave myself up for dead," he replied, leaving the grass verge beside the shrubbery on which he had taken refuge, and approaching the car. "And me a cripple! How could you?"

"It's stupid to talk like that. You're not a cripple. You deserved to be frightened, anyway, for behaving so atrociously. You didn't take anyone in, you know. It was as plain as a pikestaff you didn't want to sit out with Mavis Warrenby. She is dull, of course. I can't think why very good people so often are. Why on earth didn't

you pretend you had to go home early, and just leave?"

"That would have looked as if I were not enjoying the party."

"Well, it would have been better than hatching up that quite incredible story about having to fetch a lot of unimportant papers for Bernard!" she said tartly.

"You wrong me, May I hand over to you the proofs of my integrity?" he said, drawing a long, fat envelope from the inner pocket of his coat and giving it to her, with his impish smile. "Is the squire still playing tennis?"

"Yes. It's no use my waiting for him. He's going home the other way so that he can look at what's been done in the new plantation. So foolish of him! He'll only wear himself out to no purpose. How insufferably hot it is!"

"Is it? It doesn't seem so to me. Are you quite well, Mrs. Ainsdale? Well enough to be driving alone?"

"Thank you, perfectly well! Is this your way of asking for a lift?"

"No, I should be afraid," he retorted.

"Oh, don't be so silly!" she said, rather roughly putting the car into gear.

He watched her sweep through the gates on to the lane, and walked on to rejoin the rest of the party.

One of the sets had come to an end, and Delia Lindale, who had been playing in it, was taking leave of her hostess. Since it was past Rose-Veronica's bedtime, Mrs. Haswell made no attempt to detain her. Her husband waved to her from the other court, and she sped away through the gate into the public footpath.

"I ought to be going, too," said Abby.

"No, you oughtn't. I'm going to run you home," said Charles.

"Oh, rot! I can easily walk."

"You can do more. You can walk beautifully, but you aren't going to."

She laughed. "You are an ass! Honestly, there's no need to get your car out just to run me that little distance."

"Of course not, and I shouldn't dream of doing so. I'm doing it for Mr. Drybeck," said Charles, with aplomb.

"Really, that is very kind of you, my dear boy," said Mr. Drybeck. "I am far from despising such a welcome offer. A most enjoyable game, that last."

"Well, if you're going to motor Abby and Mr. Drybeck home, you could give the major a lift, too," suggested Mrs. Haswell. "You won't mind waiting till the other game finishes, will you? Mavis, now that I've got you both here, I want you and Mrs. Cliburn to help me over the prizes for the whist drive. I ought to get them on Monday, I think, but we never settled what we ought to spend on them. It won't take many minutes. Ah, I see the game has ended! Who won? You looked to be very evenly matched."

"Yes, a good ding-dong game," said the squire, mopping his face and neck. "Midgeholme and I just managed to pull it off, but it was a near thing. I'm not as young as I was. Hallo, you back, Plenneller. Thought you'd gone."

"But could you have doubted that I should, sir? Your words struck home! I have fetched the correspondence which has for too long languished on my desk. I have no excuse: I didn't even find it interesting."

The squire stared at him under his bushy brows, and

## Continuing . . . Detection Unlimited

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gave a grunt. "No need to have rushed straight off for those papers," he said. "However, I'm obliged to you. Where are they?"

"Can it be that I have erred again? I gave the envelope into Mrs. Ainsdale's keeping."

"Pity. Lindale could have taken it home, and run his eye over it. If you're going my way, I'll walk along with you, Lindale."

"I'm afraid I'm not, sir. We didn't come in the car. I'm going by way of the footpath."

"Yes, yes, that's all right, so am I. Going to have a look at my new plantation. My land stretches as far as the path, behind this place, you know."

"Now, nobody must go before they've had a drink," interposed Mrs. Haswell hospitably.

"Nothing more for me, thank you," Mr. Drybeck said. "I must not hurry my kind chauffeur, but I have promised my housekeeper I will not be late. She likes to go to the cinema in Bellingham on Saturday evening, you know, and so I make it a rule to have an early supper to accommodate her."

"By Jove, yes!" said the major, glancing at his watch. "I must be getting along, too!"

"Perhaps I had better go quietly away," said Gavin, setting down his empty glass. "Something tells me I am not popular. Of course, I see now. I should have presented those papers to the squire on bent knee, instead of handing them casually to his wife. It is all the fault of my upbringing."

"If you want a lift, it'll be a bit of a tight squeeze, but I'll see what I can do," said Charles, disregarding this speech.

"No, I shall wend my lonely way home, a solitary and pathetic figure. Good-bye, Mrs. Haswell. So very many thanks! I enjoyed myself enormously."

He followed the car party to the drive, and saw them set off before limping in their wake.

"I say, is it all right? I mean, oughtn't you to have given him a lift?" asked Abby, who was sitting beside Charles in the front of the sports car. "Does it hurt him to walk?"

"Not a bit!" said Charles. "He can walk for miles! Just can't play games."

"It must be fairly rotten for him, I should think."

"Oh, I don't know!" said Charles, with cheerful unconcern. "He's always been like it, you see. Trades on it, if you ask me. People like my mother are sorry for him, and think they've got to make allowances for him. That's why he's so infernally rude."

"I must say it was the outside edge to walk off like that, and leave Mavis stranded," admitted Abby.

"Yes, and absolutely typical. Does it for effect. Walter Plenneller was an awful type, too, though I daresay being smashed up in the war had something to do with that. I say, sir," he called over his shoulder to Mr. Drybeck, "were all the Plennellers as bad as Walter and Gavin?"

"I was not acquainted with all the Plennellers," replied Mr. Drybeck precisely. "The family has been established in the county for five centuries."

"Probably accounts for it," said Charles. "Run to seed."

"Tragic affair, Walter Plenneller's death," remarked the major. "Never more shocked in my life. I must say, though I don't like Gavin, I was awfully sorry for him. Of course, the poor chap wasn't in his right mind, but it can't have been pleasant for Gavin."

"He committed suicide, didn't he?" said Abby. "Aunt

Miriam's always a bit cagy about it. What happened?"

"Gassed himself, and left a letter to Gavin, practically accusing him of having driven him to it," said Charles briefly, swinging the car round the corner into the High Street. "It was all rot, of course. He used to have the most ghastly migraines, and I suppose they got a bit too much for him."

"Set me down at the cross-roads, Charles," said the major, leaning forward to tap him on the shoulder. "No need to come any farther."

"Sure, sir?" said Charles, beginning to slow down.

"Quite sure—and many thanks for the lift!" said the major as the car stopped. "Good-bye, Miss Dearham. I hope we shall have the opportunity of playing again before you go back to town. Good-bye, Drybeck. Right away, Charles!"

They left the major striding off in the direction of Ultima Thule, and turned the corner into the Trindale road. A few hundred yards along it, Charles stopped again to set down Mr. Drybeck, and then drove forward and into Fox Lane.

"Come in and have a drink!"

invited Abby. "Aunt Miriam would adore you to. She never drinks anything herself, but she's firmly convinced I can't exist without having gin laid on. Practically like running hot and cold water, so she lays in quantities whenever I come to stay. She's an absolute toot, you know. Most people's aunts disapprove madly of cocktails, and say, 'Surely you don't need another, dear?'"

"Of course I'm coming in," said Charles, swinging his long legs out of the car, and slamming the door. "That's why I brought you home."

"I've a good mind not to ask you."

"Wouldn't be any use at all. I've been hopelessly in love with your Aunt Miriam for years, and I shan't wait to be asked. What's more, she's my Aunt Miriam, too!"

"She is not!"

"You ask her. She adopted me when I was a kid," said Charles, opening the wicket-gate into the neat little garden of Fox Cottage, and stooping to thump with heavy goodwill, apparently much appreciated, the elderly and stout black Labrador, who had advanced piously to greet him.

"You see! Even Rex knows I'm persona grata here, and you

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — February 3, 1954



# Fashion PATTERNS

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## NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS

### No. 900.—INFANT'S FROCK

A pretty organdy infant's frock is obtainable cut out ready to make and clearly traced ready to embroider. The color choice includes white, and pastel shades of pink, blue, lemon, and green. Size: Infants; price 14/9. Postage and registration 1/4 extra.

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Three good-wearing linen-finished cotton tea-towels are obtainable traced ready to embroider with a choice of a blue or red border. Size: 22in. x 32in. Price 8/11 each; postage 10d. extra. Set of three, 20/3; postage and registration 2/.

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The set, featuring an initial motif, is obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider on cream or white linen. The centre mat measures 17in. x 17in., the plate mat 12in. x 9in., cup-and-saucer mat 9in. x 9in. When ordering please state initial required. Nine-piece set including 1 centre, 4 plate, and 4 cup-and-saucer mats; price 18/11; postage and registration 1/9 extra. Thirteen-piece set including 1 centre, 4 plate, and 8 cup-and-saucer mats 22/9; postage and registration 2/3 extra. Serviettes to match: size, 11in. x 17in.; price 1/9; postage 4d. extra.

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## Infantile Eczema



### CASE HISTORY

LEFT: Medically attested photograph of Mr. J.B. (Zurich) taken on 16/9/48. Shaded sections diagnosed as Eczematous Perifolliculitis of 20 years' duration.



### CASE HISTORY

RIGHT: Medically attested photograph of B.B. (Balfour) taken on 6/5/53. Improvement 7 weeks after F-99 treatment; in 5 months face, head, etc., were clear, knees and elbows taking another 3 months.

## Eczema



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## Continuing . . . .

wouldn't say he was bursting with intelligence, would you?"

"No, and I wouldn't say he had any discrimination either," replied Abby. "He'd welcome any tramp to the house."

She glanced up to see that Charles was looking at her with a smile in his eyes, and something more than that. "Would he?" he said.

"Yes, he's—he's disastrously friendly," she said, aware of a rising blush. "Oh, there's Aunt Miriam at the window beckoning to us. Come on!"

Charles followed her into the cottage. Miss Patterdale, in happy unconsciousness of having timed her interruption opportunely, greeted them with a nod, and said, addressing herself to Abby: "Well? Had a good time?"

"Lovely," replied Abby.

"She can't very well say anything else," Charles pointed out. "I was her host."

"I don't suppose that would stop her. Have some gin!" said Miss Patterdale, supporting the character given her by her niece. "You'd better mix it yourself: I bought the things the man said people put in gin. I hope they're all right."

Charles grinned, surveying the array of bottles set forth on the Welsh dresser. "Something for every taste. You have been going it, Aunt Miriam. Let's experiment!"

"What on earth is it?" asked Abby, presently receiving a glass from him, and cautiously sipping its contents.

"The discovery of the age. And a glass of nice, moderately pure orangeade for Aunt Miriam," Charles said, putting a glass into Miss Patterdale's hand, and disposing his large person on the sofa beside her.

"You haven't put anything in it, have you?" said Miss Patterdale suspiciously.

"Of course I haven't! What do you take me for?"

Miss Patterdale regarded him with grim affection. "I'm not at all sure. You were one of the naughtiest little boys I ever encountered: that I do know!"

"That was before I came under your influence, best of all my aunts."

"Get along with you! Who was at your party—besides Thaddeus Drybeck and the major. I know they were there."

"Everyone was at our party, except you and Our Flora. In fact, it was the success of the season. The major told us that Our Flora was expecting a litter. No, I don't mean that, though she looks so like a Pekinese herself that I almost might."

"Ullapool," said Miss Patterdale. "I ran into Flora on the common, and she told me."

"Ullapool!" exclaimed Charles reverently. "That's a

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new one on me, and it has my unqualified approval."

"Well, it's not for me to poke fun at Flora," declared Miss Patterdale. "Anything more unsuitable for a couple of goats than Rosalind and Celia I've yet to discover. I must have been out of my mind. Celia got loose this afternoon, and strayed. That's how I met Flora. She was giving some of her dogs a run on the common."

"Has Ullapool had her puppies? I'd love to see them," said Abby.

"No, she hasn't. It wasn't really that which kept Flora away from the party. She didn't want to meet Mr. Warrenby. They've had a violent quarrel. He kicked Ulysses off one of his flower-beds."

"Beast!" said Abby.

"Yes, I'm not at all in favor of that," said Charles. "I shall pay a visit of condolence. I like Ulysses. He's a dog of dignity. Ready for another Haswell Special, Abby?"

She handed him her glass. "Thanks. As a matter of fact Mr. Warrenby wasn't there. He had to do some work, or something. Mavis was rather dim and boring about Poor Uncle having to get his own tea."

MISS PATTERDALE said firmly, "It would do Sampson Warrenby good to get his own tea. If Mavis had an ounce of commonsense—but she hasn't, and she never will have. The longer I live the more convinced I become that self-sacrificing people do a great deal of harm in the world."

Charles choked over the Haswell Special. Abby, regarding her aunt with indulgent fondness, said: "You're a nice one to talk!"

"If you mean by that that I'm self-sacrificing, you are mistaken."

"Aunt Miriam! You spend your entire life slaving for the indigent and the sick, and every charity that raises its head—"

"That isn't self-sacrificing. It comes of being a parson's daughter, and acquiring the habit young. Besides, I like it. Shouldn't do it if I didn't. When I talk of self-sacrificing people, I mean people like Mavis, making doormats of themselves, and giving up everything they like to satisfy the demands of thoroughly selfish characters like Sampson Warrenby. Making a virtue of it, too. It isn't a virtue. Take Sampson Warrenby, if he weren't allowed to ride roughshod over Mavis, he'd be very much better behaved and consequently much better liked."

"He might be," said Charles dubiously. "Speaking for myself, I find him even more unlikeable in his ingratiating moments. You ought to hear Dad on the subject of his antics on the Borough Council."

He says Warrenby would like to be a sort of puppet-master, pulling strings to set the rest of 'em dancing to his tune."

"Power complex," said Abby, nodding wisely. "I expect my old toot would find him an interesting study."

"I may be out of date," said Miss Patterdale, "but I do not think you ought to call Geoffrey Silloth a toot—whatever a toot may be!"

"But he is a toot, an angel! You are too, and it's someone lamb-like, and altogether a good thing—and memorable!"

"I have never met Mr. Silloth, but I know what I look like, and it isn't a lamb. Not at all sure it isn't rather like a goat," said Miss Patterdale reflectively. "Not Celia, but Rosalind."

This unflattering self-portrait met with such indignant refutation that Miss Patterdale, though maintaining her customary brusqueness, turned quite pink with pleasure. At other drink was clearly called for by the time her young admirers had, as they hoped, convinced her that she bore no resemblance to a creature it would have been the height of menacity to have called a pet animal; and Charles got up to mix it.

It was as he was handing her glass to Abby that the garden gate was heard to click, and Abby glanced over her shoulder, saw through the open casement Mavis Warrenby, coming in a stumbling run up the flagged path, one hand pressed to her panting bosom, and her whole appearance betokening extreme agitation.

"Why, what's up?" exclaimed Abby. "It's Mavis."

The front door of Fox Cottage stood hospitably open but it was seen that even in emergency Miss Warrenby was not one to burst uninvited into a strange house. A trembling knock was heard, accompanied by a fearful voice. "Miss Patterdale! Oh, Miss Patterdale!" it wailed.

Charles, who was standing by the dresser, with a gin bottle in his hand, cast a startled and inquiring look at his bosom, and then set the bottle down, and went out into the narrow front passage. "Hallo!" he said. "Anything wrong?"

Mavis, who was leaning in a limp way against the doorpost, gasped and stammered. "Oh! I didn't—I don't know what to do! Miss Patterdale—Oh, I don't know what to do!"

"What's the matter?" asked Miss Patterdale, who had by this time joined Charles in the passage. "Come inside! Good gracious, are you ill, child?"

"No, No! Oh, it's so awful!" shuddered Mavis.

"Here, hold up!" said Charles, seeing her wilt against the wall, and putting his arm round her. "What's so awful?"

"Bring her into the parlor!" commanded Miss Patterdale. "Abby, run up and get the sal volatile out of my medicine chest! Now, you sit down, and pull yourself together, Mavis! What has happened?"

"I ran all the way!" gasped Mavis. "I shall be all right. I didn't know what to do! I could only think of getting to you! I felt so sick! Oh, Miss Patterdale, I think I am going to be sick!"

"No, you aren't," said Miss Patterdale firmly. "Lay her on the sofa, Charles! Now, you keep quiet, Mavis, and don't try to tell me anything until you've got your breath! I'm not surprised you feel sick, running all the way from Fox House in this heat. That's

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## FOR THE CHILDREN

### Wuff, Snuff & Tuff

By TIM



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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—February 3, 1954





## 15 hairsets for 3/6

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—February 3, 1954

right, Abby: put a little water in it! Here you are, child! Swallow this, and you'll feel better!"

Miss Warrenby gulped the dose down, shuddered and began to cry.

"Stop that at once!" said Miss Patterdale, recognising the signs of hysteria. "No! It's no use trying to tell me what is wrong while you're sobbing in that silly way: I can't make out a word you're saying. Control yourself!"

This bracing treatment had its effect. Mavis made a great effort to obey, accepted a proffered handkerchief, and after mopping her face, and giving several gulps, sniffs, and sobs, grew more composed. "It's Uncle!" she managed to say. "I didn't know what to do: I thought I was going to faint, it's so awful! I could only think of getting to you, Miss Patterdale."

"What's he been doing?" demanded Miss Patterdale.

"Oh, no, no! It isn't that! Oh, poor uncle! I knew I oughtn't to have left him alone

## Continuing . . . .

like that! I shall never forgive myself!"

"Look here!" said Charles. "Just what has happened to your uncle?"

She turned dilating eyes towards him. "I think—I think he's dead!" she said, shuddering.

"Dead?" Charles repeated incredulously. "Do you mean he's had a stroke, or something?"

She began to cry again. "No, no, no! It's much, much more dreadful. He's been shot!"

"But—" "For heaven's sake, girl!" interrupted Miss Patterdale. "You say you think he's dead. Surely you didn't come here, leaving the unfortunate man alone, without making certain there was nothing you could do for him?"

Mavis covered her face with her hands. "I—I know he's dead. I thought he was asleep, and it seemed so unlike him, somehow. I went up to him, and then I saw!"

"You saw what?" said Miss Patterdale, as Mavis broke off. "Try to pull yourself together!"

"Yes, I'm sorry. It's been such a shock. In the side of his head—just here"—she pressed her left temple—"a—a hole! Oh, don't ask me! And I heard it! I didn't think anything about it at the time. I was just getting over the stile at the top of the lane, and I heard a gun fired. It made me jump, because it sounded quite close, but of course I only thought it was somebody shooting rabbits. And then I opened the garden gate, and saw uncle on the seat under the oak tree . . ."

"Gosh!" uttered Abby, awed. "Who did it? Did you see anyone?" Mavis shook her head, wiping her eyes. "No one hiding in the garden? Round the back?"

Mavis looked at her in a bemused fashion. "I don't know. I was so shocked I never thought of anything but that poor uncle was dead."

"But didn't you even look?" insisted Abby. "I mean it had only just happened, and whoever did it can't possibly have managed to get away! Well, not far away, at all events!"

"No, I suppose—but I didn't think about that! I only thought of uncle."

"Yes, well, all right!" said Charles. "I suppose that's fairly natural, but when you realised he was dead what did you do? Have you rung up the police, the doctor?"

She blinked. "No—oh, no! I knew it was no use sending for the doctor. I didn't think about the police. Oh, need we do that? It seems to make it worse, somehow. I mean, uncle would have hated it! Having an inquest, and everyone talking about it."

"Merciful heavens!" ejaculated Miss Patterdale. "Have you no sense, Mavis? You know very well I'm not on the telephone, and you come running here before ever you've—now, don't for goodness' sake begin

## Detection Unlimited

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to cry again! Charles, where are you going?"

"Fox House, of course. I'll ring up the police station from there, and stand by till they arrive."

"Yes, that's the best thing," she approved. "I'll come with you."

"Better not, Aunt Miriam." "Nonsense! There may be something we can do for the poor man."

"Oh, Aunt Miriam, couldn't I go with Charles?" begged Abby. "I know all about first-aid, and—"

"Certainly not! You'll stay here and look after Mavis."

The distance between Fox Cottage and Fox House was short. The house was set back from the lane, from which it was separated by a low hedge.

not familiar with the correct procedure on occasions like this, but I'm pretty sure there ought to be a doctor here as soon as possible. Do you know which room the telephone's in?"

"In the study. That one, on the right of the front door."

He strode away across the lawn to the house. It was built of mellow brick in the form of an E, and the principal rooms faced across the garden to the lane and the rising ground of the common beyond it. The long windows on the ground floor stood open, and Charles stepped through one of these into Sampson Warrenby's study. The telephone stood on the knee-hole desk, which also bore a litter of papers and documents. Charles dialled Dr. Warcop's number.

When he rejoined Miss Patterdale, a few minutes later,

## Beauty in brief:

## FOR BETTER SKIN

By CAROLYN EARLE

● Spots flourish on an oily skin, so if you suffer from them take care not to add more oil by using face creams.

SOAP and water are best—a thorough lathering at least twice a day. A sulphur soap for washing is worth trying.

Washcloths, towels, and powder-puffs should also be kept scrupulously clean.

By using a fresh piece of cotton-wool every time you powder your face you will avoid re-infecting the skin.

Use complexion milk for daytime cleansing, and a good medicated lotion as a powder base.

If you should suffer an acne outbreak on back and shoulders, protect the blemished areas from dark materials or sweaters and any non-washable materials by wearing high-cut underclothes.

And get out in the sun as much as possible. Sun-lamp treatments taken under supervision may help in winter.

It had no carriage sweep, a separate gate and straight gravel drive having been made beside the garden to enable Mr. Warrenby to garage his car in a modern building erected a little to the rear of the house.

Charles drew up outside the wicket-gate giving access to a footpath leading to the front door, and switched off his engine. In another minute he and Miss Patterdale had entered the garden and were bending over the lifeless form of Sampson Warrenby, slumped on a wooden seat set under an oak tree and at right angles to the lane.

Charles straightened himself after one look, and said, rather jerkily: "Who was his doctor?"

"Dr. Warcop, but it's no use, Charles."

"No, I know, but probably we ought to send for him. I'm

that redoubtable lady was staring fixedly at a bed of snapdragons. "Well? Find Dr. Warcop in?" she said.

"Yes, Surgery hour. He's coming at once. Also the police, from Bellingham."

Miss Patterdale cleared her throat, and said in a fierce voice: "Well, Charles, there's nothing you or I can do for the poor man. He's dead, and that's all there is to it."

"He's dead all right," said Charles grimly. "But if you imagine that's all there's going to be to it, Aunt Miriam, you'd better think again!"

## To be continued

All characters in the serials and short stories which appear in *The Australian Women's Weekly* are fictitious, and have no reference to any living persons.

## A Flower For Miss Thomas

from page 5

length, his hands on her shoulders.

The telephone rang suddenly, peremptorily, startling them both. He said nothing to her as he lifted the receiver, though he didn't take his eyes from her face.

He seemed to be watching her even more attentively than he was listening to the telephone. In a moment or two he spoke. Miss Thomas had taken his free hand in hers.

"It is very kind of you to have sanctioned it, sir. Unfortunately, it is not now re-

quired. The customer is getting married."

She smiled as she saw him start and put the receiver an inch or two from his ear, as though someone had fired a gun suddenly at the other end. The voice from London was quite loud, evidently expressing some very genuine feeling spontaneously.

John Myers winked at Miss Thomas while the voice delivered itself of its sentiments forcefully and at length.

"Very annoying, sir," John Myers put into the first pause that came. "It would have been far more sensible if she had got married before and not bothered us at all."

He put down the receiver, and London was once more three hundred miles away. Then he took her other hand in his, and drew her towards him. "Don't you agree?" he said in a tone of voice that no bank manager ever employed to any customer of the opposite sex in the ordinary course of his business.

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# A Touch of Garlic

**CLEAMING COPPER** makes an attractive setting for Canton cabbage flavored with garlic and served with savory crackers. The crackers keep indefinitely uncooked, and cook in three seconds in hot fat. See recipe for Canton cabbage below.

● **Used with discretion, garlic can work miracles of flavor, turning a simple dish made from inexpensive ingredients into a gourmet's delight.**

**M**ANY good cooks are afraid to use garlic because they believe that so strong a seasoning will overpower all other flavors, but this is not true.

Tastes vary considerably, and only experience can help you decide exactly how much garlic to use. Until you know the right amount, it is wise to use a little less than the quantity stated in the recipe. Seasonings can be added but not taken away after cooking, and tasting is the only way of finding out whether you have used enough or need a little more. The following recipes will please the most fastidious. Try them and see how the hint of garlic steps up the flavor without being overpowering.

Spoon measurements in all our recipes are level.

## STEAK DIANE

One and a half pounds best-quality fillet steak cut very thin, 1 or 2 tablespoons butter, 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce, 1 clove garlic, peeled and cut into 4.

Pound the fillets with a steak mallet or rolling pin until thin and flat. Melt butter in heavy pan;

when bubbling, add Worcestershire sauce, reduce heat, and cook 1 minute. Now add steak and cook quickly, about 1 minute on each side. Throw garlic into pan, toss around lightly for half a minute, remove and serve at once.

## CANTON CABBAGE

Half a firm cabbage, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 1 or 2 eggs,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. minced steak, 1 clove garlic, 9 tablespoons rice, 2 extra tablespoons butter or substitute,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup boiling water,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. shallots, 1 cup peas, salt to taste,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. prawns (optional).

Wash cabbage well, remove coarse stem, shred into  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. strips. Toss in pan with the 1 tablespoon butter, add vinegar, cover and cook very gently, shaking pan frequently for 20 minutes. Remove from pan. Grease pan, add unbeaten egg, "string" yolk with a fork, allow to set over gentle heat. Remove from pan, cut into strips. Fry minced steak in a small quantity of good shortening with finely minced garlic until just cooked. Thoroughly wash rice, cook until light brown in the extra 2 tablespoons butter or substitute, stirring constantly. Add boil-

ing water, cook until dry. Repeat the half cup of water (always boiling) until rice is fluffy and dry. Add shallots, cut into small pieces, including green stalks, with the last lot of water. Fold in salt to taste, barely cooked peas, egg, cabbage, minced steak and shelled prawns if used. Toss lightly and leave to reheat. Serve with savory crackers as illustrated, and mock soya sauce.

**Mock Soya Sauce:** Mix 2-3rd cup water with 1-3rd cup Worcestershire sauce.

## FISH MOUSSE

One and a half pounds white fish fillets, milk, 2 small onions, bay leaf, 1 small carrot, 1 tablespoon butter,  $\frac{1}{4}$  clove garlic,  $\frac{1}{4}$  small green pepper, 2 cups medium thickness white sauce,  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup very finely chopped or minced prawns, salt, pepper, pinch nutmeg, breadcrumbs, grated cheese.

Wash fish, cut into service-sized pieces. Cover with equal parts of milk and water, add 1 sliced onion, bay leaf and thinly sliced carrot. Cook until just tender. Drain, remove any skin and bones, flake or mince flesh finely. Place in ovenware dish. Melt butter, add finely chopped garlic, remaining onion (finely minced) and very finely chopped green pepper. Saute 3 or 4 minutes. Add white sauce, prawns, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Pour over fish when hot, top with bread-

crumbs mixed with an equal quantity of grated cheese. Bake in moderate oven 30 to 40 minutes. Serve hot.

## VEAL A LA MARENGO

Two tablespoons butter or substitute or oil, 2 lb. veal steak, 2 onions, 1 tablespoon flour, 1 clove garlic, 1 cup dry white wine, 1 cup water, 1 tablespoon tomato sauce, salt, pepper, 3 or 4 sprigs parsley, sprig of thyme, 1 bay leaf,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. mushrooms (optional).

Cut veal into small service-sized pieces, brown on all sides in hot butter or substitute. Add chopped onions and flour and allow to brown, then add crushed or minced garlic, wine, water, and tomato sauce. Season with salt and pepper, add parsley, thyme, and bay leaf tied together with cotton. Cover and simmer gently 1 hour. Add washed, stemmed mushrooms, if used, cook 15 minutes longer. Serve with a thick sprinkling of chopped parsley and triangles of fried bread.

## ITALIAN SPAGHETTI WITH MEAT SAUCE

Half pound round steak,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. chopped liver (or chickens' livers), 2 medium onions, 2 carrots,  $\frac{1}{4}$  clove garlic, 2 sticks celery,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup good shortening, 2 cups chopped tomatoes,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped parsley, cooked spaghetti, grated cheese.

Trim steak, put through mincer. Chop onions, carrots, garlic, and

celery. Saute in hot shortening, add meat, cook over medium heat, stirring frequently until meat changes color. Add tomatoes and simmer 1 hour. Stir in parsley. Place alternate layers of meat and drained spaghetti in greased ovenware dish. Top with grated cheese and extra parsley. Reheat in oven and serve hot.

## VEAL AND KIDNEY CASSEROLE

Four veal kidneys, salt, paprika, 1 cup stock, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute,  $\frac{1}{4}$  clove of garlic, 1 dessertspoon chopped parsley,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons flour,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sherry, 4 thick slices of bread, grated cheese.

Remove skin and core from kidneys, soak  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour in salted water. Rinse and dry, cut into cubes. Dust lightly with salt and paprika. Add hot stock, simmer 5 minutes. Drain, reserving stock. Place kidneys in greased ovenware dish. Melt butter in clean pan, add finely chopped garlic, cook 2 minutes. Add flour, stir until lightly browned. Stir in reserved stock and sherry. Continue stirring until boiling, add parsley. Pour over kidneys, cover closely, bake in moderate oven 20 minutes. Toast bread, sprinkle with cheese, place on top of kidneys, return to oven or place under grill until cheese is melted and lightly browned.

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## New Kellogg's BRAN FLAKES

# Clown cakes win £5 prize

Clown cakes, ideal for a children's party, head the list of easy-to-make recipes which win prizes for readers this week.

**MAKING** and fitting the clowns' caps, cutting the jubes and cherries, and creating the faces is not too difficult a task for children, so let them help make the party cakes.

The frosting on the clown cakes is best when freshly made, so it is wise to make the cakes the day before and frost or decorate them on the morning of the party.

Recipes which win consolation prizes, savory veal shape, easily made cheese snacks (to be served hot), and a three-way summer sweet, cater for older members of the family.

Remember when entering recipes in this popular contest to be sure that full name and address (including State) is on every page.

Level spoon measurements are used in all our recipes.

### CLOWN CUP-CAKES

**Cake Mixture:** Four ounces butter or substitute,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, 2 eggs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla, 2 cups self-raising flour, pinch salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk.

**Frosting:** Two egg-whites,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar, pinch cream of tartar, 3 tablespoons water, vanilla, colored jubes and cherries to decorate.

Cream shortening, sugar, and vanilla. Add eggs one at a time, beating well. Fold in sifted flour and salt, alternately with milk. Fill into 2 dozen greased patty-tins; bake in hot oven 12 minutes. Cool. Trim one side of each cake so that it stands upright. Place all frosting ingredients (except vanilla) in basin over boiling water. Beat with rotary beater 14 minutes. Remove from heat, add vanilla, beat well. Cover cakes with frosting. Make eyes, noses, and mouths from pieces of colored jubes or cherries, press into position. Make hats from fancy paper.

**First Prize of £5 to Mrs. H. Malin, 29 Elgin St., East Gordon, N.S.W.**

### SAVORY VEAL SHAPE

One knuckle of veal, 2 pig's trotters, 1 onion, salt, 1 teaspoon peppercorns, juice of 1

lemon, sprig of thyme, pinch cayenne pepper, 1 tablespoon mushroom ketchup (or any other ketchup), 2 hard-boiled eggs, 1 teaspoon mustard, pinch nutmeg, 2 chopped gherkins.

Wash meats well, place in large saucepan with whole peeled onion, salt, and pepper-corns and thyme tied in a piece of muslin. Add nutmeg, cover with cold water, bring slowly to the boil. Cover and simmer three hours or until meat leaves bones easily, or pressure cook about 1 hour. Remove any remaining onion, herb bag, all bones and any rough skin from trotters. Add lemon juice, gherkin, mustard, ketchup, and cayenne to cooking liquid. Mix meat with quartered hard-boiled eggs, pack into mould, and carefully add cooking liquid. Leave overnight to set. Cut into wedges and serve with salad.

**Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. G. Delmenico, Joy Pde., Noble Park, Victoria.**

### CHEESE SNACKS

**Cheese-flavored savory biscuits,** 1 egg, salt, pepper, grated tasty cheese,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon grated or scraped onion, 2 or 3 rashers bacon, parsley.

Beat egg, gradually add grated cheese until mixture is very stiff. Add onion, season with salt and pepper (very little salt is needed—bacon provides sufficient). Spread mixture on biscuits, top with bacon (rind removed), and grill quickly until heated through and bacon is crisp. Serve hot garnished with parsley.

**Consolation Prize of £1 to Miss J. Vincent, 55 Hataitai Rd., Wellington, N.Z.**

### THREE-WAY SUMMER SWEET

Four tablespoons rice, 2 cups milk, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 dessertspoon butter or substitute, pinch salt.

Cook rice in top half of double saucepan with milk, sugar, butter, and salt until rice is soft and milk is absorbed.

1. Mix 1 cup cooked rice with 1 cup drained and crushed or diced pineapple. Fold in 1 cup whipped, sweet-



**FOR A PARTY NOVELTY** try these little clown cup-cakes which children will love. They may even enjoy helping you make them. The prize-winning recipe is given below.

ened cream or evaporated milk. Chill before serving.

2. Flavor the cold cooked rice with syrup from a bottle of Maraschino cherries and add chopped cherries to taste. Fold in  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 cup whipped, sweetened cream or evaporated milk.

3. While rice is still hot, beat in 1 egg-yolk. Cool, fold in stiffly beaten egg-white, flavor with vanilla and almond essence.

**Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. F. M. White, Morven Post Office, via Culcairn, N.S.W.**

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—February 3, 1954

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As big as a shoe."

THEN SHE SINGS:—

"God save our gracious Queen,  
Long live our noble Queen,  
God save the Queen.  
Send her victorious,  
Happy and glorious,  
Long to reign over us,  
God Save the Queen."

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**Vogart** TRANSFER PATTERNS 178



AMERICAN VOCART transfer pattern No. 178 is a new transfer sheet that has been specially designed to brighten daily kitchen chores. Seen lucky kittens for kitchen towels are featured, and there is a different one with a good luck motif for every day in the week. Other suggestions for using these motifs are on a laundry bag, a cooking apron, or a shopping bag. The transfer sheet, which measures 24 x 28in., costs only 2/-. Patterns are available from our Needlework Department. For address see page 47.



# "William and Mary" house

Little old houses with modernised interiors are in fashion in England, and among the young couples who have bought homes of this kind are London architects Gordon and Ursula Bowyer.

THE Bowyers are very proud of their 260-year-old "William and Mary" house, which they found in Maze Hill, Greenwich.

The furnishing and renovation of the three floors took a long time and they did much of it themselves.

A joint workroom, a study, and a guest-room open off the hall on the ground floor; living-room, dining-room, and kitchen are on the first floor; and the main bedroom and the nursery occupied by their two young children are on the top floor.

The entrance door has been painted turquoise, the door

curtain (a feature of English homes) is yellow.

Blue carpet covers the stairway leading from the grey-painted hallway to the upper floors. The beautiful mahogany stair-rail is mellow with age, but the "spokes" have been painted white. Brilliantly hued butterflies in flat glass cases decorate the wall.

One wall of the study is soft blue, the others are white. Big cupboards hold blueprints and other architectural paraphernalia. Chairs have blue-and-green plaid covers.

All rear windows overlook a long, sheltered garden where fruit trees are growing close to walnut, ash, lime, and lilac.

—Eve Gye.



OUTSIDE view of the Gordon Bowyer's house at Maze Hill, Greenwich, England. The house, built during the reign of William and Mary, was restored in the 18th century. The Bowyers bought it in 1952, modernised the interior and added a garage.



LEFT: Corner of the long living-room. The French-grey wallpaper has a fleur-de-lis design in white to match ceiling. Window drapes are in lime-yellow; carpet is grey. The settee is in Indian-yellow; one chair is olive-green, the other is blue. Lampshades are white.

RIGHT: Architect Gordon Bowyer is sitting near his contemporary sculpture, modelled in iron, of a reclining figure. Bookshelves line one end of the living-room. Easy chairs are in mid-night-blue and Indian-red. Cushions on chairs and settee are in red, palest lime-green, teal-blue, and saxo-blue.



BELOW: Kitchen walls are white, but a wide band in daffodil-yellow to match the ceiling is set above the cupboards to give an illusion of sunshine on dull days. Wire racks, painted green, hooked to a wood plinth under the window, hold vegetables. Floor is covered with a blue cork linoleum.



DINING-ROOM: Walls are grey-green, ceiling and woodwork white. Floor is of polished oak; chunky pineapple motifs in soft greens, yellow, and black decorate the white curtains. Dining suite is mahogany.

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# Mandrake the Magician

**MANDRAKE:** Master magician, and  
**LOTHAR:** His giant Nubian servant, with  
**PRINCESS NARDA:** Set out on a dangerous expedition to find the white queen of Taboo Land. They make camp and Mandrake and Lothar go to

a nearby native village to get bearers for the journey. The natives refuse to help. That night Narda hears a strange noise like the crackling of a fire. Mandrake investigates and finds a swarm of soldier ants advancing on the camp. **NOW READ ON:**

THEY DASH THROUGH THE INSECT HORDE AND HEAD FOR THE RIVER!

ODOR--THE PLACE WAS SWARMING WITH THEM!

HURRY! KEEP GOING!

THE ANT BAND MOVES LIKE A DEATH RAY ACROSS THE CAMP, EATING AND DESTROYING EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH, EVEN SOFT WOOD AND CLOTH!

IF THEY REACH THE COPTER, THEY'LL DESTROY HALF OF IT--THE INSULATION, CLOTH AND WOOD--AND RUIN IT!

THEM COMING CLOSE--US BETTER GO INTO WATER.

WE CAN'T GO INTO THE RIVER! REMEMBER, THE **PIRANHA**!

THAT'S RIGHT!

AS THE BILLIONS OF MUNCHING SOLDIER ANTS ADVANCE UPON THEM AT THE RIVER'S EDGE--

MANDRAKE--WE'RE TRAPPED BETWEEN THE SOLDIER ANTS--AND THE **PIRANHA** FISH IN THE RIVER--

OUR ONLY WAY OUT IS UP! LOTHAR, GRAB THAT OIL DRUM!

THROW THE OIL ON THOSE ANTS--AND THEN STAND BACK!

MANDRAKE IGNITES THE OIL, BLAZING A PATH ACROSS THE INSECT HORDES--

THEY DASH OVER THE SMOKING PATH TO THE COPTER--

OU--GROUND STILL HOT?

KEEP GOING! DON'T STUMBLE!

TO BE CONTINUED



# TELL ME ANOTHER SAYS KLEENEX

**BROKEN NAIL?  
DON'T NAIL**

SPLIT A NAIL? CUT KLEENEX TISSUE TO FIT. STICK DOWN WITH POLISH—MORE POLISH OVER THE TOP. DRY, THEN VARNISH IN YOUR USUAL COLOR.



## LET'S CURL UP

GOODBYE TO FRIZZY HAIR—TEAR KLEENEX INTO LONG STRIPS—WIND A CURL ROUND EACH STRIP—KNOT THE ENDS OF THE KLEENEX, IN A FEW HOURS—SMOOTH, SOFT WAVES.

## MAKE-UP— AND KISS

KEEP YOUR LIPSTICK ON YOUR MOUTH. APPLY AS USUAL—BLOT HARD ON ABSORBENT KLEENEX TISSUE—POWDER YOUR LIPS LIGHTLY. (KLEENEX FOR REMOVING MAKE-UP, TOO.)



## EYES RIGHT!

SORE, STRAINED EYES? SOAK TWO SOFT KLEENEX TISSUES IN LOTION, OR MILK. SQUEEZE OUT, PLACE OVER YOUR EYES, RELAX FOR 15 MINUTES. THEN WATCH THEM SPARKLE!



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The AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—February 3, 1954

# TEENA



# Fashion FROCKS

Ready to wear or cut out ready to make



NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. If ordering by mail, send to address given on page 41. Fashion Frocks may be inspected or obtained immediately at Fashion Patterns, 642 Harris St., Ultimo, Sydney.

"FRANCES."—An attractively styled matron's dress obtainable in printed silk jersey with a white pique trim. The color choice includes blue, aqua, mustard, brown, red, green, and navy, all printed with a white overcheck.

Ready to Wear: Sizes 36in. and 38in. bust, 79/11; 40in. and 42in. bust, 84/-. Postage and registration, 2/6 extra.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 36in. and 38in. bust, 59/9; 40in. and 42in. bust, 62/3. Postage and registration, 2/6 extra.

"MERYL."—A pretty one-piece dress made in everglaze cotton. The color choice includes white, blue, green, aqua, rose, junior-navy, and Kelly-green.

Ready to Wear: Sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 67/9; 36in. and 38in. bust, 69/11. Postage and registration, 2/6 extra.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 46/6; 36in. and 38in. bust, 48/3. Postage and registration, 2/6 extra.



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Figsen comes in convenient tablet form—makes it easy to take anywhere, any time. Two strengths—Regular, equally suitable for adults and children; Double Strength for those adults who need a more positive laxative action.

Regular **2/3**  
DOUBLE STRENGTH, 3/6



# NYAL

## **Builds Strength and Energy**

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**NYAL CROPHOS**



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**4/9**

**NYAL DECONGESTANT EYE DROPS**



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**2/-, 4/1**

**NYAL BABY POWDER**



## **Prevents "Wind" Pains**

After each feeding, NYAL Milk of Magnesia is the ideal preventive for "wind" pains and acidity in infants. Its gentle laxative action ensures regular habits, too. Pleasant to take. Pure and safe for even the youngest baby. Sweetened or Regular.

**2/6, 4/3**

**NYAL MILK OF MAGNESIA**



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NYAL Camphor Ice	1/10
NYAL Corn Remover	2/6
NYAL Dandruff Lotion	4/6
NYAL Diarrhoea Mixture	3/3, 4/9
NYAL Earache Drops	2/6
NYAL Emulsified Liquid Paraffin	4/6
NYAL Eucerin	3/6
NYAL Eye Lotion (with Plastic Eye Bath)	3/6
NYAL Holdrite (Dental Plate Powder)	3/-, 4/6
NYAL Kidney Pills	3/6, 6/6
NYAL Kleenrite (Dental Plate Cleanser)	3/6
NYAL Kwik Tan Cream	2/6
NYAL Kwik Tan Sun Oil	3/11
NYAL Milk of Magnesia Tablets	2/3, 4/6
NYAL Prickly Heat Powder	3/-
NYAL Toothache Drops	2/6
NYAL Vitamin and Mineral Tonic	6/-, 11/-
NYAL Vitaminised Children's Tonic	5/9
NYAL White Lip Salve	2/3

## **FIRST AID NEEDS**

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NYAL Zinc Cream	2/3

## **BABY NEEDS**

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NYAL Sore Throat Gargle	2/9, 3/9
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# The Fatal Step

BY CLARISSA FAIRCHILD CUSHMAN

The Australian Women's Weekly

Novel February 3, 1954

SUPPLEMENT. Must not be sold separately





## THE FATAL STEP

IT was a moment of tense concentration. Aunt Reuben was about to try on her new spring hat. The room where she sat, the two young cousins behind her, the cat on the window sill, all felt the importance of the great moment.

Aunt Reuben was named Reuben because her father, a pious old tyrant always spoken of as old Granther, had been annoyed that she was not a boy as he had specified. He had always conducted early morning prayers for one hour by the clock and the reading for that morning had been: "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power."

Had Granther lived long enough, he would have found Reuben all of these things. No one had ever called her Ruby.

Looking now like a fragile china shepherdess—though if there was anything breakable about her it had never been discovered—she stared into the old tilting shaving mirror that was propped between two windows and tried not to let her face show that she was more than pleased with her new soft silk suit and the perky way the white ruchings around the neck framed her face. Andree had taste, no doubt about that. She had made no financial mistake when she had set her up in that little shop just off Fifth Avenue.

She felt Andree's hand stroke a single white hair into immaculate position, and heard her say, in her husky, provocative voice, "Now!" She looked in the mirror at the faces of the two cousins standing behind her: so different from each other, but both beautiful, as they had a right to be.

Both had inherited the straight Fenner carriage, the dark Fenner hair, the wide-spaced, grey, Fenner eyes. Andree's gleaming dark hair was parted in the middle and smoothed sleekly back so that it showed only the barest ruffle of curl at the temples; her simple black dress was a perfection of smooth fit. Chic was the name for Andree.

Martha, on the other hand, was really the more lovely of the two: her cloudy dark hair was blown untidily into a mass of curl—she had not even bothered to run a comb through it since her forty-mile drive from New York to this Connecticut farm—her tweed suit needed pressing, and her blouse collar was rumpled. And Martha's deep grey eyes gazed at her aunt's reflection with that grave honesty that was Martha herself. Martha was—twenty-five? Yes. That made Andree twenty-nine.

Solemn, that's what the moment was. For all three knew that it was important, this suit and hat. After all, she, Reuben, was the advertisement, the stalking horse, that lured exclusive and elderly and gold-lined pocket-books to Andree's shop.

Andree, catching her aunt's eye in the mirror, winked at her. "Don't look so much as if I were a tart's darling. Just open your mouth wide. This won't hurt as much as you think."

She took the hat from Martha's hand and poised it over her aunt's head. A tricky hat, discreet but not too discreet, and curling down from

it was a single, brilliant green parrot feather tipped with cerise; cerise was the trade-mark of Andree's creations.

The feather waved gently, and Thomas Aquinas the cat, sitting purring in the sun on the window sill, stopped purring, and eyed the feather speculatively.

Aunt Reuben straightened her back that was, being a Fenner back, already as straight as a carriage whip.

"Is that chicken feather going under my chin?" she demanded. "Andree, it will tickle. If it tickles, I will not have it."

"Certainly it will tickle if you don't hold your chin up," said Andree. "If you want to lunch at the Sherry-Netherland with your chin all scrooched down like an old lady, I'll—I'll design you a bonnet with it—certainly, with a little bib attached. And it will instantly become all the rage and Andree Chapeaux et Ensembles will make a lot of money and you'll make all the smartest newspaper columns—as usual."

"Did you ever yet see me with my chin scrooched?"

"Very well then, ma chérie."—Andree's mother's father had been French—"hold your head still."

ALL at once, in the hushed silence that attended the sacred rite of setting the new hat on the head, they heard a car bumping over the wooden bridge that crossed Big Fenner Creek just after you turned into the Fenner Farm road. The old homestead itself was on a prominence overlooking the little village of Fennerville and the peaceful Connecticut valley cut by the junction of Big and Little Fenner Creeks; but the approach to the farm was along a gorge cut by the Big Fenner, and the rocky walls brought to the house the sound of any car entering the land nearly a quarter of a mile away.

"There's a car coming," said Martha, who could be counted upon to mention the obvious.

"Probably Lottie," said Aunt Reuben, scrooched her chin to test the feather as Andree's white hand smoothed it lovingly under her chin. "Sew your cars and decided to come in and get the latest gossip. Andree, it tickles." She gave the feather an irrelevant flick.

Delicately Andree adjusted the feather, and Aunt Reuben tried not to look pleased at herself in the mirror. "Two cars," Martha said. "And neither one is Lottie's old rattletap." As if in agreement, the first car purred by the sunken road below the house and went on to the barn.

"Even if it doesn't tickle, it looks as if it did," said Aunt Reuben. "See who it is, Martha."

Martha crossed the big room, once the farm kitchen but now the main living room, to the row of windows that overlooked the barn. The hutch dining table that stood there was a litter of silver-and-cerise boxes and tissue paper, but one fascinating long box was still unopened and Andree had said, "Naughty-naughty," to her when she had started to open it. As she looked down toward the barn she

rested her mind on the box. It said to her, "I am yours."

In front of the barn, between Andree's smart grey car and her own ancient station wagon with a corner cupboard sticking out of the back, was a flashy maroon roadster with the top down.

"It's Cousin Zachary," said Martha. "Or at least it will be, as soon as he's smoothed his hair back over his bald spot."

As Andree said, angrily, "What does he want now?" and Aunt Reuben said, "Money, probably," the car door slammed and Zachary appeared.

"Our gentleman of leisure," reported Martha, "is attired this morning in fawn slacks, fawn plaid coat, fawn and white shoes—suede, I think—no hat, and he's just putting his comb in his pocket. Just the costume, fellows, to wear to visit my dear old aunt and Our Country Estate. Got to pay my respects to the old girl once in a while, you know. After all, I'm her heir. Here comes the other car. Whoops!"

For the second car, a modest blue coupe, roared in behind the others, came to a shattering stop, and in the same breath there catapulted out of it, first, the longest spiked heels Martha had ever seen, followed by two of the best looking legs Martha had ever seen and then the rest to match: an ash-blond dream in cream-colored wool with a black yashmak thing on her head that swirled under her neck and down her back.

"Good heavens!" said Martha. "A blonde. And what Zachary is saying to her! If I'm any judge, if Zachary hadn't so uneconomically been born a gentleman he would throw her back in the car, release the clutch, and push the whole thing over our precipice into Fenner Creek."

"Not if it's a blonde," said Andree, crossing to the window in her turn. At that moment the girl looked toward the house.

"Why, I know her," said Martha. "I'm sure I do. But I can't think where."

"Magazine advertisements, darling. Ten years of it," stated Andree. "She goes by the name of Carol Carroll, and lives in nightclubs. Doesn't look a breath over twenty, does she? Zachary's being seen with her. When he isn't seen with her, he probably is. With her, I mean."

"Andree, you're dithering," said Aunt Reuben.

"So will you, my sweet, very shortly." For the blonde had won the argument. Zachary now threw up his hands in a gesture of resignation and went back to his own car.

The blonde sleeked up her stockings, smoothed down her slim hips and drew on a pair of gloves. They were cerise and it could be seen that narrow, in-folded cerise insets had been set in the dress, pointing down the skirt and visible only when she moved.

"Yours, Andree!" cried Martha.

"She copied it, the dirty so-and-so. She came in and looked. Mine is black. Well, if I don't drop a lighted cigarette into that, my name isn't—Why, there's somebody else."

For now, from Zachary's car, another man suddenly appeared, a tall dark-



haired young man, dressed conservatively in a dark suit.  
"Bill Madison," whispered Andree.  
"What's he doing here?"

Something in the whisper—surprise, certainly, but was it also alarm?—made Martha turn and look at her.  
"Why I know Bill Madison," Martha said. "I've danced with him. What's the matter with him? He's a heavenly dancer."

"S-Sh! He's a heavenly dancer, all right, but right now he is the lawyer for the Ipswich Golf Club. Gossip is they want to buy this place. Don't let on to Aunt Reuben that you know. She's never breathed a word, but I can't believe she doesn't know."

"Sell the Farm?" Even in a whisper Martha's voice was shocked. "When we've owned it two hundred and fifty years?"

"What are you children whispering about?" asked Aunt Reuben.

"Zachary's brought Bill Madison," said Andree clearly. "The lawyer for the Ipswich Club. Did you ask him here, Aunt Reuben?"

"Certainly not! He wrote to me, and I wrote back that I saw no need to see him."

**R**EBUBEN came to stand with the two girls. The three in the house watched the three at the barn. The armed truce having been negotiated, Zachary pulled a tan pigskin suitcase—his from his car. Bill Madison gathered up a large package. Zachary gathered up another that had celery sticking up out of the top, and Carol hung over her shoulder one of those large handbags—celery also—that will hold enough for a long weekend.

Thomas Aquinas, who had been sitting on the window sill, twitched his grey tail and hitched up his back. "Wrump!" he said.

"Thank you, Thomas," said Aunt Reuben leity. "This is an outrage on Zachary's part. In letting either one of these strangers here without asking me was an outrage. That girl is Zachary's—um. Well, if they think they're going to spend the weekend—"

"Bill Madison," murmured Andree, smoothing down her own hips. "I'll toss you for him, Martha."

"Why bother?" Martha said tartly. "You'll get him anyway."

"You'll have a fighting chance if you take off that suit you've slept in and put on the new outfit I brought you. Oh—oh—a gift for you, ma petite tante, from the Greeks." For Carol had now really burdened herself with a large beribboned box, and the three started for the house.

"Orr—yes!" said Thomas Aquinas, and dropped off the window sill and spumed in a flurry of grey fur into Aunt Reuben's bedroom.

"Intelligent cat," Martha remarked. "Do we humans put a good face on it, or do we spit?"

"We remember our manners," said Aunt Reuben severely.

"If she stays the weekend, you'll have to do a lot of remembering, ma chérie."

Aunt Reuben raised her fine thin brows. "How can she stay, if I don't ask her? Martha, put these boxes and my hat in my room. Go and comb your hair and put on the suit Andree brought you. Let it never be said that the Penners are not always fashion plates at eleven-thirty in the morning."

Martha dutifully gathered up the boxes and crossed the big kitchen to Aunt Reuben's room. This room and bath and a small modern kitchen had been made out of the original lean-to that jutted behind the immense old chimney breast, whose great hearth

and hanging cranes filled almost the whole back wall. She paused for a moment in the door to watch her aunt.

It was a sort of procession that entered the door. First came Zachary, his face obscured by the large paper bag and the burst of celery. Sandwiched between him and Bill Madison, minced Carol.

"Aunt Reuben," said Zachary, his face not emerging from the celery. "This is Carol Carroll, a friend of—Bill's back there. Bill Madison—my Aunt Reuben, Andree you know." His voice rose. "We just happened, Aunt Reuben, by the merest chance to run into Carol in the village. She had trailed—I mean—there she was. And so I invited her to help eat our goose. Goose, Aunt Reuben. Imagine that! Think of our luck in finding a goose! And I'm going to cook it."

Fortified by this ingratiating announcement, his face found courage to emerge from the screen of celery, beaming, or trying to. Even in his forties Zachary could still rely on his ability to charm women when he needed to. Except his Aunt Reuben. His eyes on Aunt Reuben disclosed now some inward trepidation.

A shrill treble came from Carol Carroll. "This is a terrible imposition, Mrs.—er—Mrs."

"Mrs. Penner. But Zach was so insistent I told him, I can't. It's just lunchtime. But he simply insisted. And this is for you." With that she deposited the large box of chocolates on Aunt Reuben. "Now do say I'm not imposing. Pretty please?"

Martha disappeared into Aunt Reuben's bedroom and began feverishly to dress. With the best intentions in the world, thought Martha, ripping off the corset cover of the silver box, Aunt Reuben won't last through much of that.

"Oh what a heavenly shade of grey-blue. I certainly can't afford it," she murmured, laying out the dress and jacket on the bed. "But clothes certainly do fortify one. And if I know anything, we three female Penners are going to need all our strength."

And besides, her memory told her, Bill Madison had been nice. Full of Irish blarney, to be sure, but rather—nice.

"And," the childish treble was saying, "you must put me right to work helping with lunch. Of course I can't cook even water, but I can set the table. And don't go to any bother for me. My manager simply has fits when I so much as look at macaroni and cheese and things like that. A lamb chop at the most."

"Andree," prayed Martha from the bedroom, as she ran a hasty comb through her hair, "do something. Don't just stand there or Aunt Reuben will explode all over everything."

And Andree did.

"Oh, it's no trouble, I assure you," she said. "Because we never have anything for lunch but lettuce and tea. Not even salad dressing. My aunt—her figure, you know. But of course you do know. My dear, how beautifully you've copied my arrest. You must give me the name of your tailor."

I'll be too late, moaned Martha to herself, as she whipped lipstick across her mouth and dashed for the door. But as she came back into the big room, a swift glance at her aunt told her that Andree's fragrant precaution had so intrigued Aunt Reuben that any imminent crisis had been averted. Zachary, as she could tell from the glowering expression on his dark sardonic face, was suffering from something, probably from self-control. She stooped her step, composed her face, and crossed the room.

Her glance caught Bill Madison's and a flash of purest admiration in his blue eyes. She smiled at him and told herself again all in one breath to remember he was Irish and don't forget Andree's here.

Carol did not wait to be introduced. "Oh, you're Martha, of course," she said in her oversweet voice. "Oh, I know I should say Miss Penner, but you see Zach has told me so much about you that I just feel—and how much you love this place and I must say I don't blame you. Such beautiful antiques I never saw. And this marvellous chimney with all those iron things on it. I never in all my life—"

"Aunt Reuben," said Zachary hurriedly, "did I tell you I was able to buy a goose? Imagine a goose in this hole in the—in this neck of the woods. And you're not to lift a finger, Aunt Reuben, about dinner. Bill and I will get it."

"Lottie is coming to get the dinner," said Aunt Reuben, lilies on the edges of the words. "There seems to be a remarkable obsession with all of you about food. Andree, will you put on the, er, lettuce and tea? Though for the men you might put on that hair of gold ham and heat those fresh rolls. Oh yes, and there's a cream pie Lottie made yesterday. You won't eat any of those, of course."

"Well now," said Andree. "I don't like to make other people miserable about my diet. I'll have just a teeny bit of the ham and just a bite of hot, and perhaps just a smidgen of pie. Perhaps I can get Carol to join me? As a kind of celebration?"

"Well," said Carol. "Perhaps. This once. Cream pie I haven't tasted it since." The violet eyes were dreamy and Carol all but licked her perfect lips.

There was a small scurry while Bill and Zachary took the paper bags to the kitchen and Andree emptied them.

"I'm Bill Madison," said a voice in Martha's ear. "Remember me? We danced three dances, and you called me Bill."

Martha flashed her best society smile over her shoulder. "Of course I remember. You were a heavenly dancer." She turned her head back to indicate that listening to Carol babbling was her greatest interest in life.

"I was just thinking," said Bill. "Why don't you show me over the place? Why don't you and I grab a sandwich and—is it hen-of-God cream pie?"

"Made with real cream," said Martha, not turning her head.

"Then definitely after the cream pie, how about your showing me about the place?"

Martha turned her head slightly. "In these clothes? I just changed into them."

"Then change back. And don't try to tell me you don't wear jeans, because I won't believe you."

**W**HATEVER had happened in between Martha had missed it. But suddenly Zachary's voice, three feet from her, was saying, "Nobody asked you to come. You thought I'd make some money on this deal, and you butted in, that's what you did. Now why don't you just go back home and stay there?"

"Why Zachary Penner! I've a good mind to tell your aunt exactly what—"

"Money," said Zachary. "That's why you're here. That's all you care about—"

"Zachary," said Aunt Reuben mildly. "It's no polite to interrupt. You were saying, my dear?"

"Oh Zach," said the high sweet



voice. "We aren't going to quarrel, are we? Miss—Mrs. Fenner, if you say I'm not welcome here—This is going to develop into no-holds-barred. Forget the cream pie. Let's grab anything and sneak out."

"There was a blank silence. "See here," said Bill in a low voice into Martha's ear. "This is going to develop into no-holds-barred. Forget the cream pie. Let's grab anything and sneak out."

Then everyone began talking at once. Andree flashed a look at Martha and jerked her head towards the new kitchen. Zachary reached it first, and Martha arrived at the doorway in time to hear Andree say to him, "—and if what you want is to get Aunt Reuben to sell, you picked a fine time to bring along the scintillating intellectual high-brow. If she doesn't cook your goose—Goose," she said, looking with distaste at the cold pimply hump by the kitchen sink.

"I didn't bring her. I've told you. She tagged along. I tried to head her off, there at the barn. Of all the gold diggers I've ever known, and I've known plenty."

Suddenly Martha was stung into saying, "So have I, I've known you."

Zachary turned to look at her. "And what ails you, my unrealistic young cousin? Why don't you wake up? This place is a white elephant. And an offer like this club one won't come again in a hurry. If this place is sold, the money can be split three ways—I'll not object to that. But if it's not sold—just don't forget it's I who inherit it, not you."

"That's all you think of!" Martha raged. "Money. Please Aunt Reuben, more money. Why don't you just drown Aunt Reuben and grab the lot? She'd as soon be dead as not have this place. You don't know her, if you think she'll sell it. She wouldn't. Not for all the money in the world. You—you parasite!"

"Parasite?" Zachary arched his eyebrows. "And just what do you think you are? Aunt Reuben set me up in my bookshop—that's true. She also set you up in your antique-furniture shop. And she set up Andree's dress establishment."

"Don't class me in with you parasites," said Andree reasonably, extracting the ham from the refrigerator and setting it out on the sink board to flank the goose. "I'm making money. One hundred per cent on the investment."

"And dirty, old broken-down furniture at that," said Zachary, still looking at Martha. "Why couldn't you have picked decorating, or—"

"It's as good as old books," Martha retorted.

"Not quite. I can at least keep my hands clean." His hands shot out. "Look at yours. Dirty."

MARTHA'S hands flew to the protection of her back. There was varnish remover on them embedded around the nails. But she had wanted to do Aunt Reuben's corner cupboard herself.

"Now you must let me—" It was Carol, at the door.

"Andree," said Martha hurriedly, under her breath, "make Bill and me some sandwiches and hand them out the window. You deal with that—that—You'll be much better at it than I."

She brushed past Carol, but even so was behind Zachary, who was already through the door and saying to Aunt Reuben, "If you'll just let me explain—" She went by them both and across the old kitchen and up the step to the front room. Bill was right behind her.

"Is that the Famous Fenner Step?" he asked.

"It is," said Martha shortly, temper still boiling in her. "You don't need to pretend this is a social call, you know. I know why you are here. And if you persuade Aunt Reuben to sell this place, I hope yours will be the third back broken on the Step."

"Now, Martha, why be angry with me? I'm just an errand boy." He paused for a moment on the Step and looked back into the "old" kitchen that had been the one-room house of the first Comfort Fenner at the turn of the seventeenth century: one room, that is, till her nine children began accumulating, and then they built the lean-to.

The formal room to which the Step led had been built much later, and Comfort's husband, listening to no woman's nonsense about digging out the dirt and making the two rooms level, had built it on a level that was a good eighteen inches above the kitchen, making what was always spoken of as the Step, with a capital.

Now, a sturdy movable bench acted as a second step; but there had been no such luxury allowed Comfort. For twenty-five years she and her children crawled—and fell—up and down it. That was why, gossip had it, her husband had been killed by it.

With Aunt Reuben the old kitchen had become a family living-room. The big front room adjoining it was formal and stately; but this "old kitchen" room was as warm and friendly as years of many lives could make it. It had been built originally of wide, three-inch-thick pine planks on walls, ceiling, and floor. They had been oiled and waxed and rubbed until they were the color of deep gold.

The entrance to it was from the front of the house under a deep overhang of roof, and windows beside that door looked down over the valley beyond Big Fenner Creek. The far wall opposite the door was almost entirely the immense hearth and chimney, the hearth big enough to sit in and still have a fire at your feet; a low fire burned in it now.

On each side of the hearth was just room for a door, on the right to Aunt Reuben's bedroom and bath, and on the left for the opening to the "new" and modern kitchen. An old dining table, with benches in front of and behind it, stood on the left side of the room under a row of low windows overlooking the valley and the junction of Big and Little Fenner Creeks.

On the right, between the Step and Reuben's door, an immense open cupboard, once Comfort's kitchen cupboard, held pewter and old silver. A pair of early five-slat armchairs stood on each side of it.

The room stood empty and quiet. Aunt Reuben had gone to her own room and the others were in the new kitchen.

"A lovely room, isn't it," said Martha with deceptive politeness. "The golf club could make this into a bar."

Bill seemed to wake from a trance. He said briskly: "So they could. An excellent idea. I'll tell the boss. I was also thinking one could roast a whole steer in that fireplace and have a barbecue." Seeing Martha's mouth begin to open in outraged protest he leaned forward and kissed it lightly.

"Don't bother. I know what you're going to say. Now hurry up and take off those glad rags. And allow me to say that they are very becoming. And what a room this one is! Wonderful for bridge parties. There there now. Save your temper tantrum and run along." He turned her around and gave her a small spank. And Martha went.

When she returned not in jeans but in a stylish suit and sweater that Andree had made her buy she found him standing in front of the old Adam fireplace looking at the miniatures. He pointed to one.

"That's the original Comfort," Martha told him. "The one who built the house."

"You look like her. Same broad forehead, square chin, grey eyes—or blue—which are they?" He turned to her. "Let me see."

"I hope I'm not like her," said Martha, keeping her eyes firmly on the miniature. "They say she was pretty ruthless."

"I know. She killed her husband."

"That's just gossip. But he was the first of the Fenners to 'die queer,' as they say hereabouts. Come on out the back way. I told Andree to hand us some sandwiches out the window."

BILL followed Martha into the library that opened off from the far end of the room. He stopped involuntarily, and Martha could feel him savoring the warmth of old leather bindings, and saw his eye appreciate the portrait of an early Fenner that hung over the fireplace. Almost her heart relented toward him.

"This wing was old Comfort's counting-house. She built it. She became a great woman of business, after her husband died. Aunt Reuben divided it in two down the middle, making this place for her husband's books, the other half into two bedrooms. That was her second husband," she added. "Her cousin. He was a great student."

"Make a wonderful poolroom," said Bill. "Or maybe ping-pong."

She gave him a withering look as they went out the door at the end of the library, said, "Wait here," and went to pick up the sandwiches.

"Fairly peaceful," Andree whispered out the window to her. "Zachary is only a pale purple now, and our adored aunt is being all honey and cream to our Carol. What Auntie doesn't discover about Zachary from that girl before this day is over won't be there to find out. Your Bill is handsome. Happy hunting, sweetness."

Hardly "my" Bill, thought Martha, and tried not to feel warm at the thought. She found him admiring the front facade, and became, out of long habit, as matter of fact as a guide-book.

"Comfort again," she said. "After her husband died—and she brought in industries of all kinds." She pointed to the delicate iron grilles that laced the long, front windows, and to the fluted columns that carried the weight of the high central roof. "Iron workers, carpenters, a gristmill, pottery making, weaving—she even tried glass. She got power from Big Fenner Creek. You can still see some of the timbers of the old mill."

As they moved away from the house, Bill turned back to look at it again. He pointed to the chimneys. There were three: the central one for the formal front room, and one for each of the lower, recessed wings—the old kitchen at the far end and the study-bedroom at this end. Their bricks were laid in a jutting pattern that gave the chimneys a spiral look.

"English," said Bill. "Saw chimneys like that on what used to be an old monastery. I was stationed near there in the war. She had taste, your old Comfort did."

"And business ability and nine children," said Martha, leading the way down the path into a stand of ancient



oaks. "Six boys, who cleared more land and made more things and had more children. And since she lived to be eighty, the place was a busy community before she died."

"You speak of her as if she were no longer ago than yesterday. How do you know all this?"

Martha looked at him in surprise. "Diaries, ledgers. And it wasn't even as long ago as yesterday. It's today. Every time we drive a nail for a picture we apologise to old Comfort. It's her house. She still owns it."

"And she owns your Aunt Reuben, too. I take it. She will own you, if you stay on this land. Frankly, that seems stupid to me. A slave to the land? What's the point?"

Martha spoke with temper. "You've come here to buy it. Why should it mean anything to you? These old oaks—there are seventy acres of them—will make wonderful fires for golfers to toast their toes at. And—oh, what's the use of trying to make you see?"

Bill, standing beside her, was silent. They had been following a trail sprouting with violets and ferns, and wild life of the valley. Now the trail left the oaks and started down a hillside through a bright glory of little pink flowers, with clumps of wild apple and hawthorn. As they descended, trickles of water began breaking from the ground, and waist-high ferns sheltered miniature gardens of mossy stones and carpets of the cherry-colored blossoms of the tiny flowering winter-green.

"It has the prettiest pet name," said Martha. "Bird-in-flight."

Suddenly there was a break in the path, and before them stretched the bottom land. Bill stopped, and Martha stopped beside him, for it had an unbelievable, breath-taking beauty. As far as the eye could see, there were bluebells and white trillium, except where cowslips laid a belt of gold along a wandering bit of water. On a hill-lock a group of wild apple made an island of pale pink. And, like a frame, dogwoods bent their branches like a drift of passing snow against the pines. Bill said nothing. He just stood and looked.

"Of course"—Martha could not keep the bitterness from her voice—"after this, all that white and blue and gold disappears. No bulldozer would hesitate to dig it up. It would make an ideal swimming-pool."

Bill was not listening. "It's a million miles from the world," he said at last.

They sat down, heedless of the damp, and Martha handed him a sandwich. "What puzzles me is," he said, "how it stays like that. Why don't people come in and dig it up and throw lunch boxes and beer bottles around?"

"Neighbors. They're all Pennersville folks. Better than watchdogs."

But as she spoke she knew it wasn't so. More and more summer weekends were spoiled by picnic litter and signs of robbery by spade and trowel.

As if in confirmation, Bill shook his head.

"It won't last, Martha. New York is an hour away. Your neighbors will sell out for what will seem like big money and picnickers will litter your woods and back off your branches and dig up your plants. It's what we call progress. Only one sandwich apiece? Does Auntie think I'm a mouse?"

He stood up and held out his hand. "Cream pie."

She took his hand and stood up.

"Still hate me?" he asked. "Still want me to break my neck on the Step?"

She looked up at him, at his very blue eyes looking into hers.

"You are quite something, Martha," he said huskily, and kissed her; and not lightly this time. It was Martha, a little breathless, who reminded him of the cream pie.

"By the way," said Martha, as they started back (single file, of necessity, and now hand in hand), "I've never heard what the club is offering for toe place."

"Three hundred thousand. Last offer. Not a cent more."

Martha whirled in the path. "Three hundred thou—Did you say three hundred thousand?"

Bill's lips thinned. "And so you, like your aunt, don't think that's enough?"

"Enough? Why it's outrageous! This old farm? I can't believe it!"

"Oh," said Bill. "I misunderstood you."

"Oh, Bill," wailed Martha. "Such a ghastly lot of money. We'll just have to take it, won't we?" She burst into tears.

"There, there, Martha," Bill said, automatically gathering her in his arms. He was not enjoying even this as much as he should have.

"Don't let her do it, Bill," said Martha's ruffled voice. "Please stop her. What's the good of money if we don't have this place? This is Penners. It's what makes us Penners."

"I can't do that, Martha," Bill said stiffly. "I'm here to negotiate the sale. I'm hired by my firm to do it. You wouldn't think much of me if I let down my firm, would you?"

Martha raised her head and stood back from him, her jaw set. "Well, it's a horrid job," she said.

"Yes," said Bill steadily. "I find I'm not liking it. And moreover, I expect to like it less and less."

"Then why don't you leave the firm?"

"What good would that do? They would just send somebody else."

WITHOUT another word, Martha turned and went away up the path.

The old kitchen, when they reached it, was rich with a lovely combination of smells. Auntie, in a frilled white apron over her black dress, was chopping celery. Aunt Reuben, in a big plain one, was mixing stuffing in a wooden bowl. Zachary, in another large white apron and one of Aunt Reuben's best damask napkins made into a peaked chef's cap, was tasting the dressing. "Just a whiff more marjoram, I'd say."

Carol was showing an expanse of silk legs in the old rocking-chair, sacred to Aunt Reuben. Thomas Aquinas was sitting on a chair and twitching his whiskers, and Lottie, the local help, was cleaning the goose and feeding the cat with tidbits.

"Ah," said Auntie, in her most provocative voice, "nature boy and girl returned. I thought having only one sandwich would bring you back." She waved her hand at the broken meats on the far end of the table. "I had to fight to save your share of pie. Coffee's in the kitchen."

Lottie, a shrivelled mite of a woman who was always dressed in checked gingham and whose unstable topknot was always in danger of sliding off her head, said "Pleased to meet ya" to Bill, expertly plucked out a pinfeather and added, "Irish I'll bet. So'm I. Garthy, the name was. Come over from the old country in seventeen-seventy."

She snapped a knuckle disparagingly at the goose. "I tell you, Miss Reuben, I know this old bird. Known him for years. Look at him. He's as gristly as an old man. I tell you, he's Ezekiel. Fish's old gander. How else would you find a goose nobody else had bought on a Saturday? Everybody hereabouts'd know

he'd be tougher'n shoe leather. And what was the matter with our havin' the ham like we planned?"

"What ham?" asked Auntie, watching Bill slice off a hearty piece and pop it in his mouth.

"There won't be any left when I'm through," said Bill, and shaved off another slice and popped it in his mouth.

Carol, sitting on the other side of him, leaned towards him to nibble daintily just an "eency weency" taste and Martha hunted in her mind for something to present a reprieve.

"I forgot to tell you, Aunt Reuben," she said. "I brought the corner cupboard. The shelves aren't done, but I can do those later and slip them in."

"Then let's have it in at once," said Aunt Reuben. "Lottie, mix this celery in the dressing and stuff the goose."

They backed the station wagon up the grassy slope to the house, and with cries and admiring of "Don't scratch it!" "No, don't slide it off!" the cupboard was manoeuvred out of the wagon and through the kitchen door.

As the two men lifted it up the Step, Lottie said, "Reminds me of old John's coffin. It bust open on the Step and his corpse slid out and old Comfort cried out—"

Zachary grunted and said, "Well, it's heavy enough. Is that what you're hiding in it, Martha? A corpse?"

Lottie, who had left her mouth open to continue her remarks, shut it and looked frightened. She never stopped saying afterwards that she should "a" known it right then, that she could feel her hair lift and her back prick.

"But how funny," said Carol. "It isn't square. Did somebody cut it off?"

In spite of himself, Bill began to laugh and Zachary nearly dropped his end of the cupboard. But Reuben did not hear. She was mothering it into its place in the far corner. And as the cupboard eased into its place it seemed to settle with a little sigh, as if it had come home. It was a piece of great delicacy, a mellow golden brown. It had four doors, two below and two above, and no centre crosspiece. Narrow inset panels gave a flowing effect from top to bottom.

Softly Reuben ran her hands over the satin warmth of the wood, and it was evident that all her senses responded to it as if it were a living thing.

Lottie gave the cupboard her weightiest judgment, standing with elbows on hips and greasy hands elevated safely in the air, looking not unlike a praying mantis. "It's mighty purty. Mighty purty, Miss Reuben. I'll betcha it's good as anything old Mark Kovarski could a done for the first Comfort."

It was a seal of belonging put on the cupboard, because Lottie spoke the voice of two centuries of local pride. Reuben turned to Martha, and her look rewarded Martha for the endless hours of scraping with fragments of glass, of stained fingers and lame arms. Then like a blow came the thought, "What's the use of the cupboard, what's the use of anything, if we are not to have the house any more?"

Resolutely, she turned back to the cupboard and opened up the doors to show Aunt Reuben how cleverly the maker had dovetailed in wood pieces on the insides of the doors to allow the outside panels to flow without interruption.

"Maybe old Mark Kovarski did do this very cupboard, Miss Reuben," Lottie tipped her head to give the cupboard a more critical judgment, and her topknot slid perilously to the side. "He did other stuff that looks like that. You know what I think? You know how old Comfort said that Mark Kovarski was carving some doors for



a cupboard for her? Then all in a hurry when her husband's dead there's a carved lid on his coffin. Where'd it come from all so quick I ask you? And who's to know I'm old Mark smuck off the carved coffin lid? who'd have time to notice? Not Comfort herself, after she'd killed old John."

Carol gave a gasp, and turned to Zachary. "You mean, she was a murderess? One of your family?"

"If she was," said Zachary, "killing her husband was the best stroke of business she ever did. It laid the basis of the family fortune. If that's the name for it. Of course now it is. And that reminds me, Aunt Reuben—"

"Yes," said Aunt Reuben. "I've been wondering when you would find the moment you considered properly auspicious."

She sat down and folded her hands. She looked very neat and prim there, her back straight, her hands quiet. She looked at the others in the room in turn. They were all looking at her.

MARTHA had taken on what Reuben always thought of as her arched look. Andree on the satin-covered Hepplewhite sofa, looked as if she had been born there; Bill, by the window, seeing her eyes on him, hastily swallowed a last bite of roll; Carol—Reuben's eyes sharpened. Carol was suddenly looking all of thirty years old and surprisingly intelligent. She filed the fact away in her mind for future reference and turned her eyes back to Zachary.

"Proceed," she said.

"Look here, Aunt," Zachary, hitching up the fine creases in his trousers, drew up a chair to Reuben's knee and leaned toward her.

"Just don't tap my knee," said Aunt Reuben. "It might be better," she waved a hand delicately. — "If you moved your chair back a little. In case you forget. That's better. Thank you."

She's a leprechaun, thought Bill admiringly; that is, if leprechauns are feminine and thoroughly delightful and only naughty. What had Zachary said to him? "Just don't fall under her spell, that's all. You'll see what I mean when you get there."

"Martha," said Aunt Reuben, "let's have a little of grandfather's brandy. Zachary needs something to get him started. He's gone all tongue-tied."

Zachary restrained the obvious retort that he hadn't had a chance yet, and the virtue of his restraint made him pompous. "Not at all, Aunt Reuben. I'm just marshalling my thoughts. I want to present the picture of this place, not as it has been but as it is today. Some of the figures are pretty complicated, and I was trying to—"

"I can do simple arithmetic. Things like income tax. It's much more likely that I'll fall asleep before you get started."

Witch, added Bill to himself. She knows exactly what she intends to do, and is just needing him for the devil of it.

"Where were we?" said Aunt Reuben. "Oh, yes. You hadn't got started yet. I'll help you. You want me to sell this place to the Ipswich Club. Take it from there. Oh, thank you, Martha. Let's toast the corner cupboard, shall we?"

They toasted the corner cupboard. Zachary drank his at a gulp, hitched his chair forward, and then pushed it back.

"Income tax," said Zachary. "You've hit the nail right on the head, Aunt. Do you realise that if you don't take this offer, that this land will be reassessed on the basis of this offer? Do you realise what that means? Five

thousand a year in taxes, at least. How will you pay them? Mortgage the place? Why, you may live to be ninety—"

He pulled himself up short, reconsidered that remark, and said, "I say ninety, because ninety is the lowest figure any of us can bear to contemplate. Aunt. At ninety—he attacked the word bravely—you will have paid out a good eighty thousand dollars, with interest. And for what, Aunt Reuben, for what?"

"For the land," said Aunt Reuben. It threw Zachary off his stride, and he forgot what came next.

"I would have the land, wouldn't I?" Aunt Reuben asked, with every show of anxiety. "Or will it by then have to be sold for taxes?"

"That's it! That's exactly what will happen," Zachary said triumphantly. "You hit the nail right on the head. How can we three, one or all of us together, meet the inheritance tax—it will be at least fifty thousand dollars—if the land is already mortgaged to the hilt? And even if we could raise the money by a new mortgage, how can we go on paying those fearful interest rates, year after year? No, we Penners just can't afford this place any longer, Aunt. Much as we love it, much as we hate to see it go—"

"And—who knows?—I might live to be a hundred. Even though you've made it clear that the sooner I die the cheaper it will be for you."

Zachary swallowed hard, and by a supreme effort managed to make his voice just gently chiding. "Now Aunt Reuben. You are just being perverse. You know I didn't mean—"

Zachary thought Bill will never last the stretch. His temper is wearing thinner by the minute.

"What's your commission on the sale, Zachary?"

Zachary drew himself up. Under his strong arched brows his eyes shone with honesty. "Not one cent, Aunt Reuben. If you don't believe me, ask Bill here. He's the one that gets the commission."

Martha, from across the room, glared at Bill. Surprisingly, and with an altogether Irish gleam in his eyes, he spoke. "It's to buy a house with when I marry."

"Well, well," said Zachary. In what he hoped was a jocular tone. "Picked out the girl yet?"

"Yes," said Bill, his eyes fixed on Martha. "I have. Finally, eternally, and irrevocably."

"Well, congratulations," said Zachary vaguely. "Now, Aunt Reuben, I've a proposition to make—"

"Have you asked her yet?" Martha's voice broke in.

"Not yet."

"Then don't bother. I happen to know she won't have you."

Suddenly Aunt Reuben's mouth twitched into the glimmer of a smile. Martha turned to her. "Excuse me, Aunt Reuben. I just happen to know the girl, and she told me confidentially that she considers him a worm."

Aunt Reuben straightened out her mouth. "Indeed, I thought for a moment there it was you he was canoeing with. I would say he was well rid of her. Only a very common sort of girl would call anybody a worm." She looked at Bill, and he could have sworn she winked at him.

"And now, Zachary. And could I ask you to be brief? It is time for my nap. And I am quite as apt to be influenced by one sentence that says something as by twenty that say the same thing."

"Aunt Reuben," said Zachary, with a small bow in her direction. "Your wish is my law. In one sentence then," and he dropped his bombshell. "I have come here to offer to relinquish the greater part of my inheritance."

He sat back and waited for the oh's and the ah's, the eager interest, the excited questions. He waited.

Since no one said anything or bothered to move, he cleared his throat, creaked his chair importantly, and refusing to be disconcerted said, "Does that sound as if I am trying to brow-beat you into this sale? Does that sound as if I were being grasping?"

"No," said Aunt Reuben. "It merely sounds suspicious. Permit me to remember, Zachary, that your talent for making something look different from what it is has already cost me thirty thousand dollars."

Zachary looked momentarily discomfited, but managed a negligent wave of the hand. "I was swindled by an unscrupulous forger, Aunt, on that manuscript. If you hadn't paid the buyer, I'm sure I would have been vindicated. However, that is all water over the dam now."

"It still shows which way the stream flows."

Zachary's temper blew. "All right all right keep your land! Give it away! Will it for a public park! I only hope you live long enough to see it knocked down for taxes, and maybe then you'll realise you've robbed us three and our children of security and—"

"What children?"

There was silence. In the silence, Carol rose. Her look of childish simple-mindedness, Aunt Reuben noted, had returned. "Will you excuse me? I'm so stupid about figures. I can add, but I never did learn to subtract. I'll go see if I can help Lottie."

She floated across the room and down the steps.

"She isn't," said Andree, "as stupid all the time as she is some of the time. That was a bull's-eye crack aimed at you, Zachary."

"She isn't," said Aunt Reuben. "stupid any of the time. Zachary, we interrupted you. Is the lecture over? It doesn't seem to have got anywhere."

WITH a visible effort Zachary smiled tolerantly. "Aunt Reuben, I had a proposition to put to you. A very sound financial proposition, but you seem determined to be—disparant. It seems to me that this Ipswich offer deserves serious consideration. Do you, or do you not, want to hear my proposition? It's up to you."

"Certainly I do, I've been trying to get you to come to the point for the last half hour."

"Then I'll put it to you straight." Zachary was now the man of affairs personified. "I'll not mince words. Accept this Ipswich offer. You'll have to pay a capital gains tax of around eighty thousand. You keep the rest—"

"Thank you," murmured Aunt Reuben.

"—and our inheritance tax on that will be—well, I'll figure it low—say, thirty thousand. But, Aunt, listen to this. This is what I want to put forward."

He hitched his chair up, pushed it back, and swept on into his sales talk. "That's over a hundred thousand dollars, and it's just money thrown down the drain. Because if you give us three the property before it's sold, no one ever has to pay the eighty thousand capital gains tax. And we don't have to pay the thirty thousand inheritance tax. We do pay a gift tax of about fifty thousand—but that's peanuts compared to— Then, of course, if you wish it, we could return the two-fifty to you—"



"Hundred thousand," murmured Aunt Reuben.  
Bill opened his mouth. "No," he said shortly. "That's not legal."  
"Surely a mere trifle," said Aunt Reuben.

"Well, I am sure you don't want to do anything that is illegal," Zachary acknowledged with a gracious nod. "But if we just kept it," and his voice dismissed this distinction as negligible, "and invested the money for you and paid you the interest—and you can rest assured we would—You see, Auntie? We've saved all that money and provided you with an excellent income which—his voice began faltering—which, added to your annuity—would provide you—"

He came to a full stop. The naive admiration on Aunt Reuben's face was just too unbelievable.

"You do amaze me, Zachary," said Aunt Reuben. "You've gone to so much trouble. Just over my affairs. And all you get out of it is a measly eighty-odd thousand."

Zachary shifted in his chair. "Well, now, Auntie, I don't get it really. I don't get the use of it until you—"

"Until I die. I know. How you do harp on that. And how important it would become to you. But Zachary, the fertility of your mind amazes me. Martha, a spot more brandy. Zachary has had the most ingenious idea. I don't mean this last complicated one, Zachary. I mean the first one."

"What first one?" Zachary looked honestly bewildered, and at the same time suspicious. "What idea?"

Aunt Reuben closed one eye and squinted with the other into her brandy glass.

"A park. A public park," she said reverently.

There was a dead silence, and into that silence she spoke dreamily. "I don't know why I didn't think of it myself. I can keep the right to live here during my lifetime, no taxes to pay, keeps the name Fenner on the land. A monument to the Fenners. It's perfect."

"Aunt Reuben!" shouted Zachary. "Are you crazy? Three hundred thousand—"

"Think what it will save you," said Aunt Reuben. "You'll never have to see the old place knocked down by an auctioneer's hammer, or worry about things like capital gains tax or how you're going to pay an inheritance tax or any other of those dreary figures. You won't even have to keep hoping I'll die so you can get the good of that eighty thousand dollars. Your share was eight thousand, wasn't it, Zachary?"

AGAIN there was that almost tangible silence in the room. "Figures," said Aunt Reuben, "confuse me—possibly. People, never."

The silence lengthened. Gradually, from the old kitchen, Lottie's voice crept into it. "—Comfort's husband, this John. He was the first Fenner the Step is said to have killed. Not that nobody saw it, understand. Old Comfort he just sent word to the village that John was dead. Well, when the neighbors come, there was old John dead with his neck broke, a layin' in his bed with his hands folded all proper and Comfort tells 'em he fell from the barn hayloft. Well, that was all right, till the funeral. They held it right there in the parlor, but when they started to carry out the coffin—the one with the carved lid that's on the corner cupboard—old Comfort, speaks up and says, 'Take him out by the

kitchen. Take him down the Step,' she says. So—"

"Were you there?" asked Carol.  
"Was I there? Say, ain't you got any sense? This happened high on two hundred years ago."

"Then how do you know what she said and all?"

"How do I know? Everybody knows. People been tellin' this story ever since. Anyway, like I say, she says, 'Take him down the Step.' So not wantin' to have a scene at the funeral, they take him down the Step. The Step, wa'n't like it is now, with that extra little step there. It was one high step. Look, I'll show you."

There was a sound of scraping as the sturdy pine second step (for no Fenner would ever mar the tradition of that high Step by having it attached) was being pulled aside.

"See? N' awful high step. They say old Comfort, when it was buildin', wanted this here kitchen raised level, or 'tother room dug down, but the men wouldn't bother with no such woman nonsense as that, and that was why they had the Step. And they do say old Comfort had a stool, like, for the babies to crawl up and down it, but old John tripped and fell on it once and kicked it all to smithereens and wouldn't let her have it no more; so she hated the Step, see, and the neighbors figured that was why she had old John in his coffin carried down it and out the kitchen—kinda servin' him right, see?"

"No, I don't see."  
Lottie's tone was shocked. "Takin' him out the kitchen door? Instead of out that beautiful big front door he was so proud of? And you know what happened? Sure enough, the front-fella tripped, the coffin bounced down the Step, the end split off, and old John slid right out across the kitchen floor."

"Ugh," said Carol.  
"An' then old Comfort cries, 'The Step—the Step! It won't even let you rest in your coffin!' And then she burst out in a crazy laugh, and the women folks had to take her away and put her to bed. And they say that that night she lay there ravin' about the Step, and how it served him right."

"Did she say right out she killed him?"

"Not exactly. She was a smart woman even when she was ravin'. But people figured she'd done it. She'd shoved him down the Step maybe, and it had broke his neck and she just said it happened in the barn. Then after John was dead the old lady—not that she was so old, then, you understand, but she lived to be old—anyway, she put in all those 'what you call industries and she bought up a lot more land and she got awful rich."

"What became of the money?"

"Dunno. Divided up among the children, most likely. After she died the land was broke up between her children and they broke it up between their children, and so on. Now it's only this one parcel, the original piece, as has got Fenners on it. When they sell this, that's the end of Fenners."

Instinctively they all glanced at Aunt Reuben. She opened her mouth to speak, but the next words stopped her. It was Carol's voice.

"Zachary say the old lady's nuts. He says it's a crime the way she's kept this land all tied up and everybody poor. He says there's a fortune in it in buildin' lots, and in the timber, too, the old lady doesn't even know about. But as he says, she's old. She won't last long. Or if she does, maybe she'll go really bats and then the court will appoint him—"

Zachary bolted from his chair. "That's a lie," he said hoarsely. "She's making that all up—"

With a peremptory gesture Reuben silenced him. A doubt of Carol's ability to make up anything so circumstantial hunt in the air and was evident on Aunt Reuben's face.

"But if she does sell now," Carol was going on happily, "this club, see, won't want all the land, and Zachary's to get some anyway. A sort of commission, I guess."

"I tell you it's a lie!" whispered Zachary. But Reuben just sat and looked at him.

"Look, dearie," said Lottie, "Miss Reuben ain't never going to sell this place. Don't you count on it. But there's more'n one way to skin a cat. Want I should give you some free advice? If Zachary'd marry and settle down, dearie, and have some kids, especially a boy, he'd get the whole caboodle. If you've a mite o' sense—well, we won't discuss that—you'd marry him and wash the paint off your face and have a couple of kids and you and him'd get the place, like as not. It's worth a try, dearie, and would serve Zachary—I mean, it would do Zachary a world of good."

BILL suddenly was on his feet. "You can count me out of this deal," he said. "The firm can send another errand boy. I knew nothing about this side deal with Zachary. If someone will drive me, or direct me to where I can catch a bus—"

Reuben turned a mild face to him. "You are not going anywhere." It was a command. "I need you. What are you so worked up about? You don't think all this comes as a surprise, do you? After I've lived with Zachary for forty-three, I repeat, forty-three years?"

She rose, and they all rose with her.

"My nap," she said. "Zachary, bring in Carol's bag. She is spending the night. It seems she just happened to bring her overnight things. I find her very enlightening. She will sleep with the girls in the ladies' room. Bill, you will sleep with Zachary in the men's room."

"Oh," caroled Carol as they came down into the old kitchen, "you're through with all the horrid old business. Lottie's been telling me—"

"My dear child, we must show you our famous Step," Aunt Reuben beamed butler and sugar on Carol. "Martha, just a snifter around again of brandy? It's the family custom. We toast the Step when we show it off. Now keep your eye on it."

This was Martha's cue, and she dutifully went into her act. She pulled out the low bench that acted as a second step, and went to Comfort's cupboard to pour out brandy in fresh glasses. Aunt Reuben went to the fire, threw on a fresh log, stirring the fire with a poker to a brighter glow. At just the moment that practice had made perfect, Martha crossed the kitchen with the filled glasses, stepping firmly on a certain wide board as she did so.

Without a sound, the high six-foot-long riser of the Step sank noiselessly into the floor, behind where it had been the floor extended into darkness. Thomas Aquinas, who had been dosing with a repulsion of goose innards, dropped like a grey shadow and disappeared in the hole.

"Now isn't that cute!" said Carol.

Lottie, who was watching from the door into the new kitchen, cackled into speech. "Built fore the Civil War, that was. Underground station to hide runaway slaves, this place were."

Bill had been examining the hole under the Step. The flooring went back six feet or so, and then stopped. The



cat had disappeared. Below the floor would be the excavation under the house.

He stood up and looked at Aunt Reuben. "You did it. The fire, that's when you did it. You tripped a catch at the hearth—"

"You're a very bright young man. Maybe I should make you my man of business."

"And you shut it the same way?"

"No. Just take hold of the riser and pull. That's so people inside could shut it quick."

Bill pulled, and as silently as it had sunk the riser rose and fitted into its place. Bill ran his fingers around the opening. No gap or seam betrayed the joint.

"A good cabinetmaker built that," Bill said. "Counterweights, I suppose, in the door frames, released by a lever hidden in the ashes."

"Right. We must let Thomas Aquinas out. Here, I'll let you open it. Take the poker. Feel that iron hook? Pull it toward you."

"It's stuck."

"Of course it's not stuck. It's just that the trap won't open except for a Fenner. Here, give me the poker."

Martha crossed the room to put down her glass, trod on the board. Aunt Reuben pulled the lever, and the riser sank out of sight.

"You see? Martha, get some goose gizzard and coax Thomas Aquinas out."

"He's et all the goose gizzard," said Lottie. "He's so stuffed full he wouldn't turn a whisker for a running mouse."

"I'll get him, Aunt Reuben," said Bill, entirely unconscious that he called her that, and lying down on the floor he rolled under the step and disappeared.

"Oh, I get it," he called back. "Aunt Reuben pulls the lever on that long rod while Martha steps on that board, and the board bends just enough to lift the long rod out of a little notch in a cross rod, so the long rod is free to work."

His head appeared under the step and an indignant cat was loosed into the room. "So unless Martha steps on the board, the mechanism stays locked. A wise safety measure, that. He came to his feet and dusted his knees. 'Can't open the Step by just finding the lever. If you wanted to hide a corpse you'd murdered, you'd always have to have a confederate.'"

"Oh I don't know," said Aunt Reuben. "A Fenner might manage even that."

"Mis' Reuben," wailed Lottie, "you shouldn't say things like that. It's tempting the powers of darkness, that's what it is. That goose gizzard. It was all misshapen. They say that's a sign of death. That's why I fed it all to Thomas—oh, Mis' Reuben! What have I done! I'll kill him!"

They all looked at the cat, who was washing his face.

"Lottie, don't be so superstitious," said Aunt Reuben. "And if you want to go home, I'll put the goose in the oven. We'll manage this evening without you. The girls are here to help."

"I'll put the goose in," Aunt Reuben said. "What time, Lottie?"

"For that piece of bull's hide? Not a mite later'n four o'clock. Set the oven at three hundred, turn her down at about five thirty, and hope for the best. Well, can't say I mind gettin' along home. My kitchen's in a mess." She began briskly to untie her apron, though she still eyed the cat apprehensively.

"And now my nap," Reuben repeated. "But before I take it, Zachary, I am going to call up my lawyer and tell him I'm altering my will. I am not exactly pleased with you. No, I'll play fair with you to this extent. I will sleep

on it first. But I doubt if sleep will change my mind."

She crossed the room, well aware that they all watched her, but at the door to her room she turned again. "Oh, by the way, Zachary, I skinned out fifty thousand dollars worth of the oaks during the war. So subtract that from your figures."

Zachary turned a sudden ugly red. "She's a master," said Bill admiringly "of exit lines. She's made a dozen in the last hour."

"And we're left to cook our own goose," said Andree. "And speaking of cooking one's goose, Zachary, you certainly cooked yours when you brought along this, er, this intellectual companion of yours."

"Me?" said Carol. "Are you referring to me? Listen you," and her voice was no childish treble but full of healthy matter-of-fact indignation, "don't blame the messes Zach gets into on me. Your aunt likes me. If Zach had let me handle the old dame, he wouldn't be in this mess. Serves him right." She pointed a finger at Zachary and said, "But you fix it up with the old lady, do you hear me? Or I'm all through."

"And good riddance," said Zachary and, flounced to the door. "I'm going for a ride." He slammed the door shatteringly behind him.

Carol turned to Bill with a smile. "Bill?"

"Whatever it is, no," said Bill. "Oh please. I do so want to see around this beautiful place. You showed it to Martha, why not me?"

About to say no again, he caught Martha's eyes. He looked back at Carol, at the still-heeled slippers, the sheer stockings, the cream and cerise dress, the smooth-brushed hair, and his eyes went back to Martha's, then to Andree's, and there was a gleam in them.

A slow smile touched Andree's lips. "Take the trail back of the barn, Bill. There's a lovely view that way. Though it's a little early for berries. Martha, let's snatch forty winks." She led the way into their bedroom.

JUST how long she and Andree had been asleep, Martha didn't know. She woke with a start to see Carol standing in the middle of the room, shaking with rage.

"Look at me," she was saying. "Just look at me. Those were new stockings. And just look at my shoes! She flipped them off and held them out to Martha. "My new spring shoes. My best shoes!" She threw them in a corner.

Martha felt an honest pang of compunction. The girl certainly was a shambles. Bill had done an unnecessary good job. Certainly Andree ought to be appreciative of what had happened to the cream and cerise dress. She raised her head. The opposite bed was empty.

"Luckily, I brought a change," said Carol, crossing the room to fling open her suitcase. From it she took a blue dress and flung it on a chair, then began ranging toilet accessories on the bureau. Martha came wide awake. If that blue wasn't the same blue of her new suit, she'd eat it. Why the little so-and-so copied!

"And," said Carol, "I saw a snake. A snake. It wiggled. In the leaves. I nearly fainted. I screamed. And Bill never did a thing. Not a thing. He went off in the brambles, and I had to go with him or stay where I was, so I went."

Martha's eyes caught the blue dress, and her heart hardened. "It probably came out to meet a friend," she said sweetly.

"Maybe, but I only saw one snake," said Carol literally. "That was plenty."

With a zip and a wiggle she was out of her cream dress. She gave it a look, and threw it into another corner, not the one with the shoes. Then she began slathering cold cream on her face. She took a wad of tissues and scrubbed off her hands.

Martha raised her head. She ought to get up and dress, but the prospect of fighting with Carol through clouds of greasy tissues for a scrap of mirror was not a happy one.

"For hours, for hours, mind you, I've been clawed by briars and chased by snakes"—Carol stripped off her nylons and threw them, this time to join the dress—and not one single pass, mind you."

Martha could stand no more. "If you're not bathing," she said, "I think I will." She went into the bathroom and shut and locked the door. She took as long at her bath as she dared, hoping Carol would be gone, her nose wrinkling in distaste as she thought of going back into the bedroom. The girl still had her hair to do. The place would be a pesty.

But it wasn't, and Martha stopped with a shock of surprise. The tissues were in the wastepaper basket, the powder was wiped from the dresser and the floor. Carol's battle equipment had been returned to her bag. The dress, stockings, and shoes were gone.

"Great heavens!" Martha ejaculated aloud. "The girl must have had some bringing-up."

"Certainly I did," Carol's voice came from the closet. "My aunt, I live with her. You're not the only one with an aunt. And frankly," said Carol, coming from the closet, "I prefer mine."

She was holding up Martha's new blue outfit on its hanger. "See? It's exactly like mine," she said. "Only—Look, you aren't going to wear it again, are you? I mean tonight? We can't both wear the same dress, now can we? Anyway—Well, lookit. To tell you the honest truth, mine's just copied. I ran it up myself. And I see I didn't get that drape just right, and I'm afraid yours will make mine look lacky. Why don't you wear that yellow?"

"I'll wear the yellow," said Martha. "Good. Well, be seein' you. Say, Break the news to me gently, but does this place run to anything to drink—and I don't mean a teaspoonful of brandy?"

"Of course. Seems to me I hear the cocktail shaker now."

"G'bye," said Carol, and was gone in a whiff of scent.

For a moment Martha stared at the empty door. What was it about Carol that made her seem different? The fact of an aunt? That she "ran up" her own clothes? That she was the most efficient operator at make-up that she had ever seen? Then it came to her. Her voice. All this time she had been talking in an ordinary human voice. Her childish treble had gone.

Martha dressed in her "yellow," which she called a dusky gold; and she put on her sheerest stockings and her best slippers. She was very critical of herself. She tied a ribbon in her hair and discarded it; she tried a necklace of amber beads and liked her bare neck better; she settled for a topaz ring that had been her grandmother's. When she came to the Step she stopped and looked around. Bill was at Comfort's cupboard examining the mark on the bottom of a pewter pitcher. He looked up quickly—had he been watching for her?—and she was rewarded by the flash of—merely admiration? or something warmer?—in his eyes.

Zachary was shaking cocktails; obviously it was not the first shaker. Andree, in a ballerina-length skirt with a stylish cutaway black top was saying "darling" to Carol; and Carol, in the



blue replica of Andree's creation, was saying "darling" to Andree.

Martha came down the Step. "Where's Aunt Reuben?"

"Gone out somewhere," said Andree. "She's not in her room. I peeked. And Zachary says her car is not in the barn."

"Didn't she leave a note? It is after six-thirty now." For Aunt Reuben was an inveterate memorandum writer.

"Didn't look. Lottie just telephoned. She claimed to be in a sidget about the goose, but I told her I had popped the bird in the oven at four, and that it was doing as well as could be expected."

"I'll look for a note," said Martha. "In a minute." For Bill was beside her saying rather pretty things in her ear.

"And Lottie said," continued Andree, "that we are not to give Thomas Aquinas a sudge to eat. I think she'll feel it's rather unfair of the old pussy if he doesn't die of the goose-gizzard omen."

"Is he sick?" asked Martha in alarm.

"Not that I know of," Andree said airily. "Haven't seen him."

MARTHA set down her cocktail glass and started for Aunt Reuben's room. "Maybe Thomas is sick, and Aunt Reuben took him to the vet. If she did, she left a note. I'll look."

"You're an old fuss-budget, Martha," said Zachary, starting to mix up another shaker of cocktails. "Can't even a cat go out on a spring night without leaving a note?"

"It isn't like Aunt Reuben to keep guests waiting for dinner," said Martha, and went on into the bedroom.

She was gone so long that finally Andree joined her.

Martha was standing by Aunt Reuben's night table. She was holding a paper. "Shut the door," she whispered to Andree. "I hoped you would come. Look at this."

She handed Andree the paper. It was in Aunt Reuben's copperplate handwriting. At the top, it said:

Sell to club 100 acres... \$100,000  
Bonds, cash on hand, etc. ... \$25,000

225,000

To Andree, now, to invest in shop on our usual terms... 75,000

\$150,000

Below, it said:  
This is my latest will, superseding all others. I appoint Andrew McPhail at Hartford to act as executor.

It was signed and dated at the bottom and in between there was a set of footings.

To Martha, house and contents, land, two-thirds of all remaining cash and other assets after debts are paid.

To Cyrus Bradstock, income during her lifetime for Lottie, \$10,000.  
To Andree and Zachary each, one-half of the remainder.

At the bottom was scrawled, Witness, Carol Carroll.

"Carol!" exclaimed Andree. "Well of all things. Now when did she— But that was hardly important. "So Aunt Reuben meant what she said to Zachary. He gets maybe twenty thousand instead of the whole caboodle. Though Aunt Reuben told me long ago that she had made provision for you and me. Probably money. And that if Zachary died without heirs you and I were to share alike."

"I didn't mean to find it," whispered

Martha. "It was shut in her writing case. I was looking for a note to us, Andree, did you know she had all that money? I thought she just had an annuity."

"She always talks about her annuity," said Andree in a low voice, staring at the paper. "This can't be money saved from annuity payments. Not with her spending abilities. The timber money? Maybe she built that up."

"We should have realised," Martha was still whispering. "She could always find money if any of us wanted anything."

"That's true," Andree agreed. She sat down on the edge of the bed and looked up at Martha, her eyes soft with sentiment. "It's his, Mr. Martha. A Fifth Avenue shop without Aunt Reuben. It just" her voice broke—"wouldn't be any fun. It's because we do it together, Martha, how—how good she is to us!"

"But of course she is," said Martha reasonably. "We must put the will back. We hadn't any right to know. And there's a note she started to her lawyer."

Andree straightened up and Martha reached over to the table and handed her a sheet of note paper. It was a letter Aunt Reuben had started to Andrew McPhail, saying that she wanted to make a new will at the earliest possible moment. She had not finished it. The last sentence was, "I want to be sure that the house and adjoin—" The last word trailed off into a blur and blot of ink.

"That was on top of the writing case," said Martha, "not in it."

"Do you know what I think?" Andree said. "She's gone to see McPhail. If she made up her mind to a new will—you know Aunt Reuben. She has to do things at once."

"Oh, but she wouldn't. He always comes here if she has any business to do."

"Not if she was in a tizzy to get the thing settled. Anyway, she's certainly gone somewhere," said Andree, rising. "We can telephone him at his home and find out."

"Call up the vet first. That's more likely. Though you would think she would have left a note."

But the vet told Andree, No, no Aunt Reuben or sick cat. So she called Andrew McPhail. Martha came forward to listen, and Andree moved the phone out where they could both hear.

"Haven't seen her," said the distant voice. "She telephoned, though. About four-thirty. She wanted me to come out for dinner. Said she had started to write me, but didn't want to wait. I told her I couldn't make it tonight, but that I'd be out first thing in the morning. She told me to bring along forms for the sale of part of the land and for a new will. If I hear from her, I'll have her call you."

Andree hung up the receiver softly. For no reason they could lay a finger on, both girls were now definitely uneasy.

The bed, yes, she had lain down. The blanket was rumpled up, and the pillow. And that was odd in itself. Aunt Reuben always straightened her bed after her nap.

"Andree," Martha whispered, "how awful this will be for Zachary. What will he do?"

"Marry a woman with money," said Andree. She was poking in the closet. "Her hat's gone, and she's still got on her new suit."

She came out of the closet. "Look, sweet, we're just working ourselves up over what's probably nothing. Maybe some friend called her up. Sickiness, or something like that. She'll be back any minute. After all, it's only seven

o'clock, and we never eat before that when there are guests."

"You're probably right," said Martha. "It just isn't like her, is all." But there was relief in her voice. She put the two papers back as she had found them: the will inside the writing case and the letter on top of it. The two went back to join the others.

They finished the new shaker of cocktails; they all sang; they danced a little; Bill insisted on seeing the inside of the corner cupboard, and he stepped into it and pulled Martha in after him and kissed her soundly if not quite soberly. She returned to the old kitchen feeling very pink and said, "Let's eat." They put the dinner on the table in a flurry of domesticity.

They ate the goose, which was surprisingly good, and salad, and apple pie, and coffee. The cocktails wore off. They cleared the table and did the dishes. They built up the fire, brought one of the benches to the hearth, and sat around the blaze. But the fire failed to cheer them. Conversation became desultory, labored, and fell into silences. No one could conceal an increasing sense of strain. Finally the clock in the front room chimed nine golden notes.

Martha turned suddenly white and pushed back her chair. "I can't stand this. Something's happened to her. She's had an accident with the car or something. I'm going to call the police."

"If she'd had an accident we'd have heard," said Andree. "That is, if she was hurt."

"That old car—" said Zachary.

"I'm calling the police," said Martha.

Then they heard it. In the distance came the familiar chug of Aunt Reuben's car. "Oh," said Martha; and without warning she burst into tears.

Instead of stopping by the kitchen the car went past, its lights whirling to make the entrance into the barn. The engine stopped, and the lights went out.

"She should have let one of us park it," said Martha, accepting Bill's handkerchief to blow her nose. "She'll stumble and fall all over herself, getting up from the barn in the dark."

"I'll go down," said Zachary, and took a torch from a table drawer. But as he went out the door a cheerful whistling was audible, coming from the barn. It was not Aunt Reuben.

A DISTANT voice hailed Zachary. "Tell Mrs. Fenner she's all fixed up, will you? I don't need to be took back. I'll just skip cross-its to home."

"Wait a minute! Isn't Mrs. Fenner with you?"

"With me? Nope. I just come from the garage. I picked up the car yesterday for a spring checkup. Anything wrong?"

"No—no. That is—she isn't here, and we thought she was out in the car." They were all crowded out the door now under the kitchen overhang.

"Nope. Not in this car. A whole bunch of other cars here. She might have taken one of them."

"Just a minute," Zachary strode off in the darkness, and in a minute his voice joined the other by the barn.

"Are they all there?" called Martha.

"They're all here," answered Zachary.

"I," said Martha, "am going to call the police."

"Wait a minute," Zachary called.

"We're coming up."

They waited there, in the light from the door of the old kitchen, while the two men came up from the barn. Jim from the garage was a cheerful blond youth.



"You worrying about her?" he asked cheerfully. "She gets around, you know, the old lady does."

"She wouldn't walk," said Zachary. "Not with a yard full of cars. A taxi! That's it. She called a—"

"Nope. Always called us. Ain't nobody else to call. She didn't call no taxi. Look, I ain't had my supper yet—"

"You run along," said Zachary. "Well, if you need me, you give me a ring." He went off whistling.

"Sally!" said Martha suddenly, her voice rising. "Zachary, was Sally there? She might have gone riding and got thrown. Oh no. She's got her best suit and hat on. Besides, you went riding."

"Anyway, the mare's there," said Zachary. "She nickered at us."

"Good heavens," said Martha. "She hasn't been fed." Faced with this homely duty, Martha felt her voice return to normal. She took the torch from Zachary's hand and heedless of her high heels, sped off toward the barn. Bill followed her.

"If you want to know what I think," said Carol, "I think she's met with foul play. Goose gizzard," she added.

"You're a help," said Zachary. "Down at the barn, Martha measured out oats while Bill forked hay and Sally spoke her mind about this unseemly neglect. They stood beside her, she plunged her brown muzzle into the oats and whiffled through her nose with satisfaction."

"I must put fresh salve on her," Martha said. "She's got a girth gail. Zachary might not have noticed. And if he did he wouldn't bother. Why he did! The salve is there." She ran her hands over the mare's sides. "She hasn't been ridden. Bill, I'll swear she hasn't. Zachary never brushed a horse so clean in his life."

"Well, he didn't say he rode. He said he was going for a ride," said Bill reasonably. "Maybe he didn't. He certainly wasn't in riding clothes."

"We keep them here," said Martha absently. "We have a shower bath and dressing room—"

"And no electricity?" asked Bill, who was flashing his light around the barn. "Aunt Reuben won't have the wires. They'd have to come from the house, and would need poles."

"They could be run underground," said Bill. "Look at those beams. Hard hewn. And that old ironware—"

**M**ARTHA'S cry interrupted Bill. "The fruit cellar! Why didn't I think of it sooner! Of course! She's gone to the fruit cellar to get something for dinner, and fallen! Oh, Aunt Reuben—"

She ran out of the barn, and Bill followed her. He caught up with her just as she got to the house. The fruit cellar was built under the new kitchen and they went down half a flight of stone steps and pushed open the door and flashed the light in. It was full of the good smell of earth and apples, but there was no Reuben. Martha opened a door that led to a small room that housed the furnace. No Reuben.

"This is an impressive spot," Bill said. Bushels of fruit and vegetables ranged along the wall under shelves of preserves and canned fruits. Wines lay on their sides in bins, hams hung from the ceiling, and along one whole side was a large modern freezer. "All this for one old lady?"

"And everybody else," Martha said. "Oh Bill! A sob broke in her throat. "Where is she?"

"Well, find her," said Bill, putting his arm around her. "Let's get out of here anyway. The thing to do is to

organise a search around the house and in the—the gorge. The earth is soft. We may find footprints."

Back in the old kitchen, Zachary was busy about the same thing. He sent Bill back to the barn for two lanterns that were there; Andree was routing out all the old torches and hunting up extra batteries.

"We'll divide up the place, and each cover a certain amount of ground. Bill, you and I will go in opposite ways along the gorge. Martha, you go down toward the marsh. Andree, you go along the short cut to town. Carol—"

"Not me. I ruined one dress today, and my stockings, and my shoes. I am not—"

"Oh yes you are, my selfish pet. Put on the clothes you ruined."

"I'll lend you some jeans," said Andree.

"Zachary," said Martha, "there's no sense in our hunting where you went riding. You'd have seen her. Where did you go?"

"Oh, I don't know that I can say, exactly. The usual round. Through the oaks, I remember, and around by the marsh, back along Little Fenner. But she might have been behind me, anywhere."

Martha stared at him. Why was he lying? Or had he ridden, and greased the sore himself? Of course, she thought. Of course. And brushed Sally so clean?

"Come on, Carol," said Andree. "I've got," said Carol, hauling on denim in the bedroom. "An appointment. Monday. For photographs, I mean. And what I mean to say is, I can not afford to have scratches on my legs."

Back in the kitchen, they got their lanterns or their flashlights and started their search. The men took the lanterns, because they gave a more spreading light to examine the gorge. Andree went past the barn and took the short cut to town that Lottie always used.

Martha sped down through the oaks on the path to the marsh, stopping now and again to call and to listen. The beam of light before her showed no signs of any footprints but Bill's big shoes and her own flat-soled casuals. If Aunt Reuben had on her good suit she certainly had on her high-heeled shoes.

If Aunt Reuben had gone anywhere, she had gone to the village. Martha turned and ran along the bridge path that would bring her to the footbridge across Little Fenner Creek. If Andree were there, they could search together.

But at Little Fenner Creek there was no one. There was no sign, either, of Andree. She called Aunt Reuben's name, but only a lonely echo came back. The blackness of the swift current made her shudder. If Aunt Reuben had fallen into that swift water swollen high with spring rains, if she were anywhere along that stream, it would take all the neighborhood to search.

Of course that was what they ought to do: call in the neighbors to help.

She started back to the house. The darkness behind her seemed to press on her and she hurried as fast as she could, refusing to acknowledge panic.

There was no one at the house and there were no lights anywhere, not even in the old kitchen. She snapped on a lamp and ran on to the telephone to call Cy.

Cyrus Bwdoock, Lottie's nephew, was their "police." Why hadn't they called him sooner? Because they were always forgetting that Cy was really their police. Cy was their friend. He had always helped the family out of everything.

She started to lift the phone, and the action brought back to her memory

Andree's telephoning first the vet and then McPhail, the vet. She sat there with her hand suspended over the phone. Where was Thomas Aquinas? She hadn't seen him since Bill had brought him up from under the Step. Not even at dinner. He wasn't a cat to miss his meals.

She let her hands fall to her lap, all memory of what she had been about to do blanked from her mind.

The Step. The Step.

But Aunt Reuben couldn't be under the Step. Hiding? Playing a joke? Of course not.

But where was she? And where was Thomas Aquinas?

On stiff legs she stood up and went into the old kitchen, her eyes fixed on the Step. She wouldn't open it. But maybe she should. Maybe Thomas Aquinas was shut in there.

**D**RAGGING a heavy stool across the floor, Martha set it on the movable board. Back at the hearth she raked in the ashes with the poker, hooked onto the lever, and pulled.

She felt it give, and saw the riser sink into the floor. Nothing. Thank God, nothing.

And then it came—the long mournful cry of a cat. And out from the far end of the Step crept Thomas Aquinas, slinking on his belly, another cry deep in his throat. And behind him, stirred by his passage, rolled Aunt Reuben's hat.

With a cry Martha rushed across the room and flung herself on the floor. Aunt Reuben! A bundle of cloth on the floor far under the Step, a blur of disordered white hair.

Sobs and broken words filled her throat as Martha squirmed herself under the Step and began pulling Reuben toward her. The body came resistlessly, solidly, and Martha had her face and shoulders in the light. With frantic fingers she tried to turn the face toward her. Aunt Reuben—Aunt Reuben—darling—darling—

She stood up and pulled the little body clear of the Step. There wasn't any blood. But she was dead.

With a great cry Martha sprang to her feet and rushed to the door. She ran out into the darkness toward the gorge, and the night rang to her call.

"Bill! Zachary! She's dead! She's dead! Oh Bill! Bill! And suddenly, before she could reach the gorge, she was stumbling and falling, conscious of pain before darkness overtook her.

Martha was still unconscious when Andree, coming into the drive below the house, found her. Martha was pitched forward on her face on the drive, her head in the mossy earth beside a large rock. Andree knelt down and turned her over, saw where the side of her head was bruised and how dirt and mold had matted into her face and hair.

She stood up and called, "Bill! Zachary!" over and over again, then she took hold of Martha under the armpits, and as best she could began to pull her toward the house.

But this would take her forever. And maybe she ought not to move Martha this way. And maybe someone else should find Martha there, there by the stone that had stunned her. Otherwise, someone might think someone had hit her—deliberately. The thing to do was to call a doctor. She laid Martha on the ground, and turned and ran to the house.

She burst into Aunt Reuben's room, and Thomas Aquinas leaped off the bed and disappeared under it and began to whimper. Poor baby, she had startled him. She dialed their local doctor, looking at Aunt Reuben's clock



as she waited for an answer. Nearly eleven.

"Doctor Connors? Did I get you out of bed, Doctor? I'm so sorry."

No. Just thinking about going."

Andree explained about Martha. "Maybe it's nothing, only I'm so ignorant. She is unconscious."

"What was she doing out by the gorge at this time of night? Playing hide and seek? It's eleven o'clock."

"No Aunt Reuben's missing. We've all been searching."

"Missing? What do you mean, missing?"

"Just that she's been gone since sometime this afternoon and all the cars are here. If you're going to come, Doctor, I'll explain then."

"Keep her warm. I'll come right along."

Andree, going back out the door to return to Martha, almost bumped into Zachary coming in under the porch.

"Andree, we've got to have search-lights. We'd best call the police. If you'll go and tell Bill—"

"Zachary, Martha's hurt." Again she explained hurriedly, leading Zachary to where Martha lay.

Zachary knelt beside her and felt around her head. "She hit something, all right. There's a big bruise here, and a lump coming. But it doesn't seem serious. Here, you take her feet."

They got her in the house, and on to Aunt Reuben's bed. Martha stirred and moaned, and then was still again.

From under the bed Thomas Aquinas leaped for the door, his tail in a wild distended fluff, and they could hear him yowling in short, guttural cries that lifted the hair.

"What's the matter with him?" said Andree. "Zachary, get me a bowl and some warm water. It can't do any harm to clean her up. And then you go out with the others. The doctor will be here shortly."

"Andree, did you find any sign of Aunt Reuben?"

"Not a thing. I didn't go beyond the bridge. To search that creek we'd need a regiment."

"I think so too. I've been down by the junction of the creeks. Bill went the other way. I think we ought to call the police."

He went out, and crossed the old kitchen into the new one. Thomas Aquinas, with a scream, ran across the old kitchen into the front room.

As Zachary came back with the water and a towel, Martha stirred, and lifted a hand to her head.

"She's coming round," said Zachary. "I'll be getting back. I'll go down where Bill and Carol are. See if they found anything."

Left alone, Andree bathed the bruise gently. It was on the back of the head, and was beginning to look ugly enough, with suffused blood. After a few minutes Martha opened her eyes.

"Andree?" she said uncertainly, and put up her hand to her head. "It hurts."

"It's all right, darling. Just a bruise. You fell and hit your head."

Martha's eyes closed, and in the silence Thomas Aquinas howled, that guttural, painful howl that made the nerves prick.

Martha's eyes flew open. For a moment they stared at the ceiling, then lowered to Andree's. Horror rose in them; and then with a violent movement she jerked upright and the bowl fell on the floor and rolled to a corner.

"Andree! Andree! She's dead. She's dead. Out there. You saw her."

"What in the world—? Now lie down, sweet. You've had a bad knock. The doctor's coming in a minute."

"You mean—she isn't dead? Oh but she is. She is. I saw her."

"Martha? You mean you did find

her?" Andree's voice shook. "Where is she?"

"In the kitchen. In the old kitchen. I found her under the Step. Oh Andree—"

"In the kitchen!" Andree started to add, "Are you crazy?" and realised that was the thing not to say. With gentle fingers she tried to push Martha back on the pillow. For a moment Martha seemed to yield and then pushed herself upright again.

"Where is she, Andree?" she said pitifully. "Where have you put her? I want to go to her. Andree, how will we bear it?"

Andree drew a long breath. "Martha, darling, I don't know what you are talking about. It's too early yet for us to give up hope. We don't know she's dead. We haven't found her."

"You haven't found her?" Martha whispered. "What do you mean? I found her. Under the Step. She's in the kitchen. The old kitchen." Suddenly she was off the bed and through the door into the old kitchen. In the middle of the room she stopped dead, staring at the closed Step.

"She was there!" she cried, pointing to the Step. "On the floor. I pulled her out. I went to call everybody. Where is everybody? She was on the floor. Of course you found her!"

"No, Martha. We didn't find her. She wasn't there. Please come back to bed. The doctor will be here any minute. He'll give you something to—"

Please, Martha."

"She was there!" Martha cried wildly. "She was there! Of course you found her! Why are you lying to me, Andree?"

Andree drew a shaking breath, but said steadily, "I'm not lying to you, Martha. I heard you call. I could just barely hear you. I came and I found you where you had tripped and hit your head. I came in and called the doctor. Aunt Reuben was not there, Martha."

The cat began a low mewing, softly, mournfully. Martha lifted her head. "He was under there with her. Thomas was hidden to him. He knows she's dead."

Andree came over and put her hand on Martha's arm. "Look, dear sweet, you've had a frightful knock on the head. Tomorrow—"

"You don't believe me," whispered Martha. "Then what happened to her? Who took her away?"

Andree stood back from Martha, looking into her eyes. "Nobody, dear. Listen to me. There wasn't time. I was here in—oh, just minutes, after you called."

But Martha was just staring at her. "You came up from where you could barely hear me. You found me. Five minutes, say. Then what did you do?"

"I was longer than that. Nearer ten minutes. I was up in the barn loft and had to get down that ladder. I thought you called from the gorge and was hunting along the edge of it when I saw you fallen by the drive. First I tried to bring you in alone. I couldn't. That took me maybe another five minutes. Then I came up and telephoned for the doctor. Then Zachary came to the door and carried you in. Darling, she wasn't here. Believe me."

"Andree" Martha was whispering again, as if talking only to herself. "She was here. I know you're not lying to me. Of course not. Why should you? But she was here."

Suddenly she whirled. "The stool! I used the stool to open the Step. See, Andree? It's back. Back on the hearth, Andree! Somebody's hidden her again. Who? Why Zachary? Why? She's back

under the Step. Hurry, Hurry, Andree. Pull the lever. I'll stand on the board."

"Of course, Martha, if it will make you feel better."

Andree crossed to the hearth. She took the poker and fitted it into the lever and pulled. The riser of the Step began to move and before it was sunk into the floor, Martha was down by the Step, peering under it.

Andree joined her. "You see, dear? There's nothing there."

"Maybe he pushed her way under." With a slithering movement before Andree could stop her, she had rolled under the Step and disappeared. A light switch snapped and light came on below the floor.

In a minute Martha was back. Her eyes were enormous as she peered through the open Step at Andree. "She's not here. But look. Her purse."

Martha threw it across the floor and it alighted to a stop at Andree's feet. Martha switched off the light and climbed out of the Step.

"Now," she whispered, "do you believe me?" And when Andree only continued to stare, horror growing slowly in her eyes, Martha said, "Her hat, too. Her hat was with her. It rolled out when Thomas Aquinas came out. It—"

The phone rang. Moving automatically, Andree turned and went to Aunt Reuben's bedroom. Martha, painfully aware of the cat still mewing fitfully in the front room, stooped and pulled up the riser. She nearly fell forward on her face with the dizzying pain that shot through her head. Grasping Aunt Reuben's purse she staggered upright and, sheltering her eyes from what seemed now the almost blinding light in the kitchen, she crept to Aunt Reuben's bedroom.

"Hold the line a moment," said Andree, turning to Martha. "There's been a road accident and the doctor has gone there. But he's sent someone to telephone and find out if you're all right."

"Tell him, yes," said Martha, dropping Aunt Reuben's purse on the bed and putting both hands to her head. "Tell him no need to bother." She dropped on the bed, turned her face to the wall, drew up her knees and moaned. "My head, Andree. My head."

But you are not all right, Andree thought. She spoke into the phone. "Tell him she seems all right, but to come when he can." She cradled the phone and then went limp. It was true. Aunt Reuben was dead and Martha had found her where she had been hidden under the Step. And that was—murder. And murder meant—police. No matter where Aunt Reuben was found now, it could never be called an accident.

Under the lamp lay Reuben's unfinished letter. She opened the case. The new will was there. Her last act had been to be generous to her Andree.

She bent her head in her hands, but only for a moment. She pulled down her hands and looked at Martha, slumped sideways on the bed. She must find the strength to carry on. She went into the bathroom and came back with a glass of something that was gently spitting.

"Tablets. Three. Here, let me help you," Martha struggled to sit up, but Andree pushed her back and supported her head while she drank.

Over the top of the empty glass, the eyes of the two girls met. "No, it's not poison," Andree said.

"Poison? What are you talking about?" In Martha's eyes there was only dullness.

Andree said steadily, "I believe you did find Aunt Reuben, Martha. That she was under the Step and you left her on the kitchen floor. She lay there ten minutes, fifteen at the most, and when I came in she was gone. I say she



was gone," she added. "Maybe I'm lying."

As Martha still looked at her uncomprehendingly, Andree went on. "Somebody hid her. Somebody hid her twice. So somebody killed her. I think whoever killed her has put her now where it will look like an accident. Why not me?"

"Somebody killed Aunt Reuben?" Dumb stupefaction was in Martha's voice. "But why? Why did he do it?"

A curious expression flitted across Andree's eyes. "I suppose you mean Zachary. But why Zachary? Why not me? I wanted money for my Fifth Avenue store." She motioned with her head to Aunt Reuben's table where the writing case lay. "Perhaps I always knew she had all that money. I am certainly the one who could have hidden her this second time."

"You? Kill Aunt Reuben? What are you saying? I'd as soon believe I did it." It was plain that what Andree was saying had no meaning to her.

**W**HAT might at another time have been a smile touched Andree's lips, barely stirring its sick whiteness.

"The police may believe it, Martha. The police may even think you did it. You, too, had a motive. You didn't want the land sold, and you were afraid she was going to sell. And now you get the land."

"Oh, no," whispered Martha. "Not any of us. Not even Zachary." "Not Bill," said Andree. "Not Carol. They were together all afternoon. Besides, they have no reason. It has to be one of us."

"He didn't go riding," said Martha suddenly. The tablets were beginning to take hold. "He didn't. Andree, Sally had not been ridden. I know. He lied. Andree. He told me exactly where he went. But he lied. He came back here."

From the front room the cat snarled loudly and spat. Andree jumped from the bed, ran across the old kitchen, and snapped on the light in the front room. There was no one there. Just Thomas Aquinas under the couch. He spat at Andree.

"Poor pussy," she said. She crossed the room and rapped on the library lights. There was no one there. She left the lights on and went back to Martha.

Martha was sitting on the side of the bed. "I've been remembering, Andree," she said. "I didn't fall and then hit my head. I was hit. I fell the pain and then I fell. But why me? Why did he hit me?"

Andree drew a long quivering breath and called up every ounce of her self-control.

"He had to get her away from the step to where it would look like an accident," she said, forcing her voice to steadiness. To have her found under the step meant a—murder investigation. But you found her. If he knocked you out, he could say you imagined it. And do you realise, Martha, that if she's found now somewhere, like in the gorge, like an accident, he'll get away with it? Even," she picked up Aunt Reuben's purse, "even her purse isn't under the Step now. Martha, if it weren't that I saw you bring up that purse, even I wouldn't believe your story."

"I remember you didn't," Martha's voice had fallen again into a whisper. "But why—why—put her under the Step? In the first place?"

"He was in the kitchen when I came out this afternoon," Andree said. "You were asleep, but I was awake, so after a while I dressed and came out here.

About five-thirty, it was. But it was daylight. He'd be afraid of being seen. He had to wait till night. Till we were all out searching. Remember how he sent us all out different ways? Then he came back to move her, but you had found her. He had to knock you out so he could get her away. Certainly he was here just after I found you. Maybe he was afraid I had seen him, because he came in just after I did and said he came back to call the police. Martha! He never did call the police! So he didn't come back for that! He—Martha, she can't be far from here. He didn't have time. Only minutes. Martha, do you feel strong enough? Let's—"

There was a burst as the old kitchen door flew open, and both girls froze where they sat, their minds' eyes seeing Zachary. What should they do? How should they act?

But it was only Lottie. They could hear her panting as if she had been running and she was talking aloud to herself. "Nobody here. So it's true. They're all out. They're lookin' for her. What'll I do? Whatever will I do? Mis' Reuben. Dear God, not Mis' Reuben."

Andree said, "You stay here. I'll deal. Now Martha, listen to me. If Zachary did do it, we've still got to prove it. If we don't let on we know, and watch him, he may lead us to her, and we can catch him at it. We've got to let him be the one to find her. Martha, can you do it?"

"I'll—yes," said Martha. "Good girl."

Andree turned to go. At the door she turned back. "Just keep remembering that this is our best chance to find out who killed her."

Then something in Martha's silence, in her staring eyes, chilled her. She said, "Martha, you do believe that I didn't do it, don't you?"

The silence hung in the air like a solid thing. Then Martha said steadily, "Of course I believe it."

Andree turned white. She stood rigid a moment, and then crossed the room back to where the writing case lay on the night stand. She opened the drawer and took out a pencil, opened the case, and wrote across the bottom of the will below Carol's signature:

Martha told me that she found Aunt Reuben under the Step. When she went to call for help I came in and Reuben was not there. And she signed her name.

"There," she said, showing the paper into Martha's nerveless hand. "Keep it. Keep it right with you. It implicates me."

Stiffly she crossed the room to the door. With her back to the room she spoke again. "It also implicates you. You said you were struck. You did hit a stone."

She went out the door and softly closed it behind her. The will in Martha's hand fluttered soundlessly to the floor.

Alone in the room then, she put an uneasy hand to her head, wondering why Andree wanted her to pretend she hadn't seen Aunt Reuben, why Andree wanted it all kept hidden. Was she to pretend so long that maybe no one would believe her story when she did tell it? And then the awfullest thought of all: Andree would have left the will, but Zachary would not. Andree was so sure it was Zachary. She had been so circumstantial about it. So—glub. She would have to be. It had to be Zachary—or Andree.

But now Andree had signed the paper. She had played fair. Wait a minute. What had Andree said? "It also implicates you." A threat. A

threat to keep her from showing the will.

But without showing the will Andree could not get the money Aunt Reuben meant her to have. The money for Andree's shop, and Andree's whole heart was in her shop.

In just a minute, she thought, putting her hand to her head: in just a minute I can think better. Andree didn't kill Aunt Reuben. The idea was preposterous.

She got up, feeling a little dizzy, but well enough. She mustn't think these things. She must keep hold of herself. Her eye fell on Reuben's writing tablet lying on the bedside table, and at the unfinished letter lying on top of it. That reminded her of the will. She found it on the floor, and carried it back under the lamp. She forced herself to read it, to comprehend it—anything to distract her mind. Aunt Reuben had intended cutting Zachary out of anything substantial, that was certain. She looked again at the letter, at the smeared blot of ink at the bottom of the paper, at the last unfinished sentence, "the house and adjoi—"

Aunt Reuben had not finished what she had started. Was she interrupted? Was that when Zachary came? But why the blot? Aunt Reuben didn't make blots. She could see her now, finishing her writing precisely, capping her pen tidily, clipping the pen neatly in its place in the writing-case, closing the case. She did it exactly that way each time. Penella she left neatly sharpened in the table drawer.

Penella. Martha jerked up her head. Penella. Her eye fell on Andree's pencilled scrawl.

Andree knew as well as she did where Aunt Reuben left her pen. The writing tablet was on top of the table in plain sight. Yet Andree had unhesitatingly opened the drawer and taken a pencil even before she opened the case.

She flipped open the writing tablet in a sudden panic. The pen was not there. It had not fallen out when she, Martha, had opened the case before dinner, or she would have noticed. It was not in the drawer of the table. It was not on the dresser.

Had Andree known it wouldn't be there?

Martha found herself staring at frightened eyes in the mirror, her own. She was reading meanings into things of no importance. After all, it was just a pen. But Aunt Reuben was so fussy about her pen. The dresser drawer, no, it was not there. The bathroom. Not there. Of course; she had carried it with her into the other room. But she had put the memorandum in the case, she had closed the case; the pen would have been clipped into its place first of all.

**D**ESPERATELY now, scolding herself for the senseless urge that drove her, Martha began really searching. In her purse; no, it was not there. Under her pillow (of course it wouldn't be there). On the floor. It must be on the floor. But where? Finally she took the lamp and set it on the floor and looked under the bed. It was there, against the baseboard. It was open, and had spilled a trail of ink across the floor. There was a blot of ink just under the edge of the bed. It had been stepped in. It had the mark of a shoe in it.

Martha rose to her feet. Here, right here Aunt Reuben had been attacked. Smothered, maybe.

She backed away from the bed in



horror. She forgot her suspicions of Andree as she thought frantically. "It happened right here! Right here in her bedroom! The blanket! It wasn't folded up. The pen!" She turned and ran across the room.

At the door she stopped. She couldn't tell Andree. Andree had known the pen would not be in its place.

She was alone. Somehow that braced her. Of course there was Bill. But Bill didn't belong. Or did he? She wished suddenly that he would come, that his big bulk and Irish blue eyes were in the next room to greet her. For she must go out there. She could not hide forever.

She squared her shoulders. She looked back into Aunt Reuben's room, feeling its warmth, its shelter. Even with Aunt Reuben gone, Aunt Reuben's strength and courage remained in the room.

For a moment she thought something had moved at the window, but she looked at it and there was nothing there. I am being utterly faithful, she thought. I'm seeing bodies where none exist. And the biggest bogey of all was to think Andree had killed Aunt Reuben.

But she went to the night table and took the will and the letter, folded them neatly, and tucked them in the bosom of her dress. She put the lamp back on the table where it belonged, opened the door, and went out.

Lottie and Andree were talking together, and as soon as Martha appeared, Andree flashed her a glance. It carried a warning which was then repeated in Andree's words.

"I was telling Lottie," Andree said hurriedly, "that the men are still searching. That we haven't found her."

"I come as soon as I heard," Lottie said to Martha. "Jim Banks from the garage told me. Cy's at Lodge, or I'd of brung him."

Thomas Aquinas, in the front room, suddenly let out a squall. They all jumped. "The cat!" cried Lottie. "I knew it. That cat's dyin'!"

They made for the front room, all three of them. The room was dark, and Andree, who was nearest, snapped on the light. The room was empty, and in the far end near the corner cupboard the cat was cowering, his hair fluffed, his eyes wide and green.

The other time, thought Andree, he had been under the sofa. And who had turned out the lights?

Martha went towards the cat. "I know, my pussy. We know how you feel. Here, come to Martha. There's a good pussy."

But as Martha neared him the cat opened his mouth and spat. Martha stopped dead. Thomas Aquinas, to spit at her! That was incredible.

"He's sick," said Lottie. "You can tell he's sick."

But Martha did not think he was sick. He was terrified.

"The light was off. It's off in the library now. I left them on. You go down through the library. I'll look out front. But don't go outdoors."

Martha ran, pausing only to turn on the lights. Her heart felt lighter. How silly of her to suspect Andree. Only Zachary could have turned off the lights. Zachary had come back twice to the house, and the cat had screamed at him both times. The cat had been with Aunt Reuben. He had gone under the Step with Aunt Reuben.

She opened the door to the outside. There was no sign, no sound in the darkness. She shut the door and went into the men's room, snapping on the light. No one. No one in the closet, or under the beds. She went through the bathroom and into the other bed-

room, leaving the lights on as she went.

No one. No one in the closet, or under the beds. She went back to the front room. Andree was just coming in the front door with Zachary.

Her eyes questioned Andree. "I met him," said Andree, "just as he was coming"—there was the faintest pause—"in."

It was more than Martha could stand. She opened her mouth to accuse Zachary, but Andree was signalling desperately with her eyes and saying no with a shake of her head. Had Andree found out something? She closed her mouth without speaking.

Zachary strode into the room. His clothes were muddy and stained with earth mould. But it was his face that held Martha's eyes. It was drawn and white, and yet somehow congested at the same time.

"We have got to have more help," he said. "Organise this thing. We'll get the police and the neighbors, and each of us will go along with a group to show them where we've already hunted. Lottie, fix me a hot drink, will you? I'm all in. That gorge is a killer. You two girls go out and call in Bill and Carol. I'll go round up some help."

He started across the room, and the cat snarled.

Zachary swore and made a lunge for it.

MARTHA plunged forward, but Lottie was before her, facing Zachary. You hurt Mis' Reuben's cat and I'll kill you, Zachary Fenner. Whose house do you think this is? Yours? Not yet it ain't. What have you done to my Mis' Reuben? What have you done to her, I say? Don't try to lie to me. I've known you since you was born. You're up to devilment. Answer me! What have you done to my Mis' Reuben?

"Nothing, you old witch! I'm trying my best to find her!" He brushed his coat with unsteady hands. "Look, Lottie. This absence of Aunt Reuben has got me down. My nerves are shot to bits. Fix me a hot toddy, will you?" He turned to Martha and Andree. "Hurry up, you two. Get Bill back here. I'll telephone." He went down the Step and across the old kitchen into Aunt Reuben's room.

Andree drew close to Martha and spoke in her ear. "He wants to get us away. Martha, we'll go out of the house if he wants us to, but you stay behind and watch him."

"Andree, you didn't tell Lottie about my finding Aunt Reuben?"

Andree shook her head. "It's bad enough without Lottie mixing her hysteria in. She was just laying into Zachary from force of habit."

Lottie, who had been on her knees by the couch, got stiffly to her feet and came up to them. "Can't get near that cat. And it ain't the goose sizzard. I tell you, that cat knows somethin'. Sixteen years Mis' Reuben's had him, and he knows—he knows—" Her voice cracked, her face worked in painful contortions. "He knows she's—dead."

She covered her face with her hands. Andree gave the bowed shoulders a squeeze and said, "We don't know that yet. I mean—" She swallowed hard.

Lottie dropped her hands. "Fix him a drink," she said. "I'd fix him a drink that would send him to the hereafter, and I don't mean heaven." She began pulling at her shawl with shaking fingers. "I tell you, if somethin' awful has happened to Mis' Reuben, he had a hand in it, mark my words. Always mean he was, even when he was little. Always doin' things in crooked kinds of ways."

Suddenly Andree spun about. "The will, Martha," she gasped. "Zachary's in there!"

"I've got them," Martha whispered urgently. "The will. The letter. I've got them here," she touched the bosom of her dress.

Zachary came back. "Let's get Bill back here. You three go and find him. You may have to spread out a bit, but he should be somewhere near the end of the gorge. I'm going to search around the house. Somehow I can't believe she got far."

Andree gave Martha a push. "Go on," she whispered. "Pretend to do what he wants. I'll bring Lottie." As the two crossed the room, Andree took Lottie by the hand and pulled her out the door. "Stay with Martha, Lottie. Don't either of you do anything foolish. I'm going to get Bill. Martha, you go around to the back and watch through the front-room windows. Just watch. Don't do anything. I'll get Bill as fast as I can."

She went off into the darkness and Martha and Lottie went around the house. At the door to the library, Martha hesitated. If she stood by the windows and Zachary came out the door, she could not see him.

"Lottie," she whispered, "you stand here at the corner and watch this door, and you can see me too. If he comes out, watch where he goes and get me and we'll follow him. Don't let him see you."

Lottie nodded, hunted about till she found a dead oak branch, snapped off the end for a handy billet, and stationed herself at the corner. Martha went on to the front-room windows and peered in cautiously, standing far enough back so the light would not strike her face. She could see no one. Moving into the bar of darkness between the windows she crept closer to the house. Carefully she edged her head around one side of the window, and suddenly the room went dark.

She gasped, startled, and drew back. Then boldly she pushed her face against the glass, shading her eyes with her hand. At the far end of the room, light from the old kitchen shone through the wide entrance where the Step was and lighted up dimly that end of the room. Surely, anyone moving would be silhouetted against that light. But no one moved and nothing stirred. Had Zachary gone out the kitchen door? No one was watching the kitchen door.

Every muscle in her legs was rigid with waiting. Then she heard it, in the distance: a car chugging its way up their drive. She pressed close against the glass. Surely, if Zachary were to do anything, he must do it now.

The car came nearer. Zachary must be able to hear it now. And suddenly she saw him. He was right in front of her window. Where had he been? The light went on. Martha nearly fell in her haste to get away from the window. But she saw Zachary, bending over a reading lamp.

Andree! Andree was the one who had been away alone.

She turned and ran back around the house. Lottie threw down her stick, and the two reached the front just as a car drew up and the doctor's cheery voice hailed them. "See you're all right, Martha. Mrs. Fenner, too? What a night! Bad smash-up. Nobody hurt much, however, thank God."

Dr. Conners came out of the car into the light from the old kitchen, a pleasant, undistinguished man; just a good family doctor living comfortably in a pleasant community.

Zachary came out of the front room door and crossed the terrace to them. "Aunt Reuben's still missing, doctor. It beats me."

"Missing? She can't be missing. It's



out of the question. She's just gone somewhere. The thing that woman can think up—and always at weekends. Never saw her equal." He was carrying his bag, and he motioned Martha into the house. "Now let's take a look at that head of yours."

Something in the doctor's oblivious cheerfulness brought back the truth to Martha with fresh awareness. She wanted to cry out that Aunt Reuben was dead. Instead she said in a dead voice, "We're frightened, doctor. Something has happened to her. We know it has."

"Now, now. Come into the house while I give you a look. I tell you, that aunt of yours would survive hurricane, plague, mayhem, and sudden death." He took her arm and led her into the old kitchen. "Um. That's quite a bump you've got there. Quite a bump. You should be in bed with a sedative. But you'll live, Martha," he said cheerfully. "I'll guarantee it."

There were voices now, and into the room came Bill, Andree, Carol, and Lottie. Carol was radiant. "Oh, we had the loveliest time, Bill and I. Now Martha, you know I wasn't going off into that nasty dark all alone. So I helped Bill. We—"

"I hoped," said Bill, "when I heard the car, maybe it was Aunt Reuben, or news, or something. Nothing?"

"Nothing," said Zachary heavily. "Doctor," said Lottie, whipping off her shawl. "You give him a shot of that truth serum."

"God bless my soul," said the doctor, startled back a full generation. "Who?" Lottie stood in the middle of the floor and pointed a joint-swollen finger at Zachary. "Him," she said. "Look at him. He knows where she is. He knows."

She raised her voice. "I know you, Zachary. I've known you since you were born. You never fooled Lottie in your life. When you begin cooing goodness, that's when you've done something specially nasty. That's what you're doing now. Sure I'm an old witch. I don't need no truth serum. I can make you tell. I always could, couldn't I, Zachary?"

She marched toward him, stopping in front of him, a menacing figure, somehow terrifying.

"You know what you did to her. You know," she raised her voice again. "And the cat knows. Why do you want to kill the cat? The cat can't tell us. It's because you know the cat knows, and you can't stand it. You can't stand it!"

"Lottie—" Zachary tried to speak. His voice was a croak. She took another step forward and he stepped back. The others were standing as if petrified.

"(See) You're going to be sick," she taunted him, her voice shrill. "You always get sick after you do something nasty, don't you? Because you can't stand it. You can't stand it. You're going to be sick and blubber it all out and say how sorry you are. Tell it, Zachary! Tell it! You know you have to so you can feel all clean again. Or do you want I should tell the police to beat it out of you?"

He was green, a sickly grey-green. They were all waiting, hypnotised, hardly daring to breathe.

Whatever might have happened no one was ever to know. Martha, with her literal mind, broke the spell. "Police," she said, as if talking to herself. "I remember now. I never did call Cy. I started to, and then I thought about where was Thomas Aquinas, and the Step, and I—"

"The Step, Martha?" Martha saw Andree's eyes blazing at her. She saw Zachary, turning away from them all, wiping his forehead and neck with his handkerchief. She saw Lottie glaring

at her, and Carol, shivering as if she had just come in out of the cold. Even Bill was looking at her—

Now what had she done?

The doctor, whom all of them had forgotten, made a bustling noise.

"Very interesting," he said. "Working on subconscious tribal fears. But if you try it on me, Lottie, you can get yourself another doctor. Well, so long, everybody. Get to bed, Martha. I'm leaving you a sleeping pill. If you're really worried about your aunt, call the troopers. As for me, I've known the devilment she can think up too often to worry any more. I used to, oh I used to. But I'm cured. Ha. That's good. I'm a doctor—and I'm cured."

He went off in a chuckle.

The interlude had given Zachary time to recover. He turned on Martha now, and she shrank back. "What was it she had said? Something about the Step. But what was it exactly?"

"So you opened the Step, Martha."

It was Zachary.

"Oh, The Step. Did I say I opened the Step? Yes, I opened the—the Step—and—and Thomas ran out and then I—she was upset and I—I forgot about the police and went outdoors to—to hunt some more and fell and hit my head, and that's all I remember."

MARTHA finished in a blaze of thankfulness. There, she thought, I got out of that all right. She was wrong. "The cat," said Zachary, "was under the Step? But Bill tossed him out. How did he get there again? Did you open the Step, Martha, so he got in? If not, how did you know he was there to let him out?"

"I—I didn't know. I didn't let him in there. I just thought maybe he was there."

"You just thought maybe he was there!" jeered Zachary. He had quite recovered from Lottie's inquisition. "That's a pretty story," he shot out his finger at her unconsciously borrowing Lottie's tactics. "You're lying, Martha. If you could see your face! Anyone can see you're lying. Well, speak up. Was Aunt Reuben there? Or maybe you were putting her there?"

"I never—I never put her there!" cried Martha, her voice breaking into a note of panic. "I—"

"Zachary!" said Andree.

"Look here, you," said Bill, stepping forward and spinning Zachary around to face him. "Just what do you think you're doing? Are you accusing Martha of—? Why, you infernal ass! For one thing, she couldn't open the Step alone."

"Oh, couldn't she! Then how did she let the cat out? Though, of course"—he whirled on Andree—"you were here. You could have helped her."

"Helped her to do what?" said Andree spiritedly. "The one thing I'd like to help with right now is to bop you with a rolling-pin. Only I'd enjoy it still more to do it all by myself."

"Is that what you used on Aunt Reuben? A rolling-pin, eh? And then hid her under the Step?"

"For heaven's sake, Zachary, be your age. Are you insinuating that I, or Martha, or Martha and I together, attacked Aunt Reuben with a— a rolling-pin—and hid her somewhere? And that we did that on the very day and hour she was going to cut you out of her will and put us in? My dear Zachary! I don't mind so much your thinking I'm a murderer as I do your thinking I'm a fool."

"Murder? Andree! Do you realise what you are saying?" He whirled on Martha. "You mean Aunt Reuben is dead under that Step?"

"No!" shrieked Martha. "She's not there. Not any—"

Whatever she said was lost for at this point Bill launched a flat into Zachary's chin, so that he fairly flew backward across the room and landed only by accident in Aunt Reuben's rocking chair. It swayed back perilously, but remained upright.

"There, you bully!" said Bill. "I've been wanting to do that since I can't think when."

"Oh my oh my," said Lottie, reliquishingly. "That was a beaut." She turned to Zachary and spoke consolingly. "Did he hurt you much, I hope? Oh my. You're going to be awful swollen up. Why'n't you get up and hit him back?"

Zachary, nursing his chin, glared at her. Bill went to stand on one side of Martha, and Andree came to the other side, whispering to her, "It's all right. Just keep your head."

"Look," wailed Carol. "I want to go home. I want to go home now. Please, somebody. Please, Bill."

"Now let's have an end to all this nonsense," said Bill. "If Martha has not called the police, they should be called at once. We've got to have help in searching. And in the meantime, let's get the Step opened. We should have thought of it earlier. No, why should we? Because if she's under the Step, it means somebody put her there. That she's dead. And that means—it was not likely an accident."

"I already left a note for Cy," said Lottie. "So he'd get it as soon as he got home from Lodge meetin'. But there's been this terrible car smash-up. Likely he's gone there."

"Well, we can't wait. We've got to get the Step opened, now."

"You're getting too big for your britches, Bill," it was Zachary, his fingers nursing the growing swelling on his chin. "I'll give the orders around here. The Step will be opened after the police get here, and not before. And by police I don't mean our local yokel, Cy. I mean the State police."

"Local yokel!" exploded Lottie. "Just for that—"

"You mean that if your Aunt Reuben is under there, perhaps injured, we'll just leave her there another hour or two?" Bill's voice was ominous. "Do I understand you rightly?"

"Another hour won't hurt her. She's—"

He paused.

"Yes, Zachary?" said Andree, advancing on him. "What were you going to say? That she's—dead?"

"Certainly not," Zachary looked at her and said spitefully. "If she's dead, it's you that thought it, not I. Remember that, everybody."

"Oh, stop it! Stop it!" Martha cried frantically. "I tell you she's—"

"And just who are you, anyway, Zachary Fenner?" interrupted Andree loudly. "To give orders around here?"

"Because it's my house," said Zachary, with slow and deliberate emphasis.

"Oh? Since when? Just how do you know it isn't still Aunt Reuben's house?"

"You can't trip me with words, Andree. So give up trying. In Aunt Reuben's absence—I am her representative. I am her nephew, remember? You two may call her Aunt, but you are only cousins. So in her absence—I give the orders."

"But the paper," said Carol, "the paper said the place is to be Martha's."

One could have cut the thick stillness with a knife. It was Bill who broke it. "What paper?" he asked.

"Why the paper, the will. Look, what are you all looking at me so funny for? I just saw it through the window. I didn't go in the room or anything."



Lottie! Oh keep her away from me, somebody! Help!" For Lottie, with finger outstretched, was marching on Carol.

Carol, squealing like a frightened pig, dodged behind Bill, buried her head in his coat. "Keep her away, I tell you." Her voice came out muffled. "She'll put a spell on me!"

**B**ILL reached around and grabbed Carol by the collar and pulled her out. "Now don't try to pull any of your little girl tricks on us," he said disgustedly. "We've all seen through you a long time ago, Lottie, go away and behave yourself. Now what's this about a paper and when did you see it?"

"Why, I saw it, I saw it," babbled Carol, clinging to Bill's arm and keeping her eyes on Lottie apprehensively. "Don't you remember, Bill, we started for the barn, and I said I wanted to borrow a sweater, and I ran back and you went into the barn and I just stopped a weeny minute to look in the old lady's window just to see—I thought maybe I could talk to her and smooth her down a little—and she was sitting up on her bed under a blanket, writing on a paper on her knee, so I just looked and—and it said, this is my last will and testament, so I just looked and—and Andree's to get a lot of money, I couldn't see how much, and Martha the land and two-thirds of something and Zachary."

But the long sentence seemed to have come to an end. They all waited, but nothing came.

"Yes," said Zachary. "Go on."

"I didn't see," said the small woeful voice. "And I wanted to. Though I didn't see how there could be much left for Zachary. But just then, well, just then the sun came out, I guess it had been behind a cloud or something, and she saw my head on the opposite wall, the shadow, I mean, and she turned around and I was so surprised I didn't move and she said, 'So you see he isn't going to be much of a meal ticket any more. You better get another one,' and I was so—so shocked—at such language, I mean, from such a nice old lady—that I just—I just went away. Back to the barn where Bill was in the left morning at all that old rubbish. And that's all I know. And don't you think there's any more!" she suddenly shrieked, pointing at Lottie. "I didn't kill her! I don't come from a family of murderers, and don't you try to make me say I do!"

"Well," said a voice from the doorway. "That was quite a speech. Who's been murdered?"

"Cy!" breathed Martha. Never, she thought, had she been so glad to see him. Even the time he had rescued her as a child from the freezing-cold water of the skating pond, when that was not like this. Just the sight of his big bulk and serene face and solid grey hair was reassuring.

"Now," said Lottie with satisfaction, "we'll get somewhere."

"I heard somebody say murder," said Cy.

"Oh, that's just this here Carol. Who's shooting her mouth. Don't pay no 'tention to her—"

"Cy," said Andree, pushing by Martha, "this is Bill Madison. He's a lawyer. He represents the Towitch Club, which is negotiating to buy this place from Aunt Reuben. Cyrus Braddock, Bill. And this is Carol, a—a friend who came for the weekend—"

"And I want to go home. Please. I want to go home. Now."

"Well," said Cy mildly, "I guess you better wait till morning anyway. Day-

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light, I mean. It's already morning by the clock."

Andree took Martha's arm, pulling her to the back of the room. "Martha, you didn't see Zachary when you were watching through the window?"

"Zachary? Yes. He came in the front room and turned on a light when the doctor came. That's all."

Andree spoke urgently. "Martha, listen to me. If we come out with that paper now, if we admit we found Aunt Reuben under the step, think how it will look. Think how long ago that was, now. What will Cy think? We can't tell about it now, Martha."

"We?" said Martha bitterly. "I can. Cy would know I never killed Aunt Reuben."

"And he won't be sure I didn't."

"No," said Martha. "And neither am I."

"Martha!" resolution faltered. She said forlornly. "I'm sorry, Andree. It's just that I can't get around it in my mind that if Zachary killed her—and who else is there who would have done it?—why didn't he destroy that will? Answer me that."

"I don't know," said Andree. "I don't know. But I didn't kill her, Martha. Why would I? Alive, she would have given me seventy-five thousand dollars—"

"I don't know," said Martha dully. "I just know I want to tell Cy all about it. I'm going to tell him, Andree. It's only fair."

Bill's voice came to them saying, "Here, for heaven's sake, let's get this Step opened."

With one motion the two cousins turned back to the room.

"Martha, you stand on the board. Andree, take the poker and pull the lever in the hearth. Zachary, stand right in front of this Step and keep your mouth shut. Martha—"

"No," said Martha. "I won't. Put the stool on the board. I can't stand on it, can't I, Bill?"

"All right, the stool," Bill brought the stool and set it on the board Martha indicated.

"All right, Andree," said Bill. "Pull the lever."

Was it the sound of the subterranean weights that roused Thomas Aquinas again? For as the riser sank noiselessly into the floor, the cat was there, on the Step, glaring with green eyes. No one saw him. Everyone was looking into the hole under the Step.

She's not there, Martha was whispering. She's not there.

And there, stirred by the faint breath of air the riser made in its passing, a bit of feather drifted from under the Step into the kitchen. It was cerise, and it was the tip of the feather—

"Andree!" shrieked Martha. "She's there! She's there! Somebody put her back!"

"There!" trumpeted Zachary triumphantly. "You heard, everybody! You heard, Cy? Martha knew she was there! You knew it, didn't you, Martha?"

But Martha didn't hear him. She was down and rolling under the Step and down the short ladder into the cellar underneath. So she missed the assault by Thomas Aquinas. For as Zachary stood there, his finger pointing at the Step, his face contorted with triumph, the cat launched itself into his face, and its claws tore open one cheek; and before he could raise his hand, with a queer smothered snarl, it sprang away and fled like a shadow across the room into Aunt Reuben's bedroom.

Zachary swore violently, springing back from the Step. Putting his hand to his face, he started for the bedroom.

"No, you don't, Zachary," said Andree. With the poker still in her hand, she moved over in front of Aunt Reuben's door. "You leave that cat alone or I'll lay this poker across your face—and be glad to."

Zachary stopped. "You, too!" he shouted at her. "You and Martha, both of you! You're in cahoots in this. I said so before and I say it again. You both knew Aunt Reuben was under that Step—"

"Was, Zachary? Isn't she there now?"

"How do I know? But you do, you scheming double-crosser. Let me by. I'm not after the cat, I'm going to find that paper Carol told about."

"In that case," said Andree coldly, "go right ahead. I'll stand and watch you. If the cat attacks you, more power to it. But if you touch that cat, I'll wham you with this poker as sure as I stand here."

Zachary wavered, and then turned. "Cy," he said, "I hope you're taking all this in. If she would brain me—and believe me, she would,—why not Aunt Reuben?"

But Cy was not there. He was under the Step with Martha. Lottie jerked her head at the Step. "Cy says you all are to stay right here in this room. So if'n you want to try leavin' it, go right ahead and Andree can brain you and welcome. Now sit down and talk, because I'm to tell him everything you say."

"She's not here," Cy's voice called up, and Zachary muttered.

"What's that you're sayin'?" Lottie said sharply.

"I said that's what Martha said, that she wasn't there!" shouted Zachary. "Can you hear me now! Martha knew she wasn't there because Martha had already moved her! Didn't you hear what Martha said! She said, 'Somebody's put her back! Back, mind you! Back!'"

"I ain't deaf," said Lottie.

"Lottie," said Zachary, dropping his voice into a mock submissiveness, "would it be asking too much of my cooler if I was allowed to go to Aunt Reuben's bedroom and wash the blood off my face?"

"Go right ahead," said Lottie.

"Andree'll go with you. Right past the cat."

**U**NDERNEATH the Step, Cy was listening to Martha's story. He was holding the two papers she had given him, the "will" and the half-finished letter. Under the light of a single electric bulb, Martha was sitting on a crate under the mechanism of the Step; the rest of the shallow excavation stretched away into murky corners and shadows. Her face was streaked with tears, but after the first frantic crying out to Cy that Reuben had been here, that she had opened the Step and found her, she told all her story, then answered Cy's questions collectedly enough.

"You used the footstool on the board?"

"That's right." And she had found Aunt Reuben dead, and had gone for help and fallen and hit her head. "Andree said she heard me call and Zachary came and they helped me into the house and put me on Aunt Reuben's bed. She said Reuben was not there on the floor where I left her. Andree didn't really believe me when I told her I'd found Aunt Reuben."

"Just a minute, Martha. What time was this? When you opened the Step?"

"I started to telephone. I looked at the clock. It was after ten-thirty. So I opened the Step about quarter to eleven."

"And you started searching for Aunt Reuben when?"



"The clock struck nine. Then the garage man came. It was soon after that."

"You didn't really begin to worry about her until nine o'clock?"

"Of course I did. More and more. But her hat was gone and her purse and she had on her new clothes. And Zachary said her car was gone. It did seem likely she'd gone somewhere and forgotten to leave a note, until the garage man brought the car, so then we knew she hadn't gone out in it."

"I see. Now, as to this 'will'."

"She was really furious with Zachary. You see, Carol babbled to Lottie that the club was going to pretend to buy all the land but was going to let Zachary have part. For building lots. You can imagine what Aunt Reuben felt about that. She told Zachary in front of all of us that she was making a new will and cutting him out. After her nap, she said."

"After her nap, Cy digested that and then asked, 'I see Carol's signature is on it. Do you know anything about it?'"

"No. That's just the way I found it." He took an old letter from his pocket, shook out the enclosure, and folding the letter and the "will" by their edges, he put them in his inside coat pocket. "This is a dreadful business, he was thinking. Reuben dead and now this new 'will.' He chose his words with care."

"This—will, Martha. You feel it's a legal will?"

"I suppose so. It's got a witness."

"You didn't want Reuben to sell the land, did you, Martha?"

"Of course not. I couldn't bear it."

"And now that—according to this will—you will get the land, you won't sell it?"

"Now? Oh, no. It's all different now. I don't want this place without Aunt Reuben. If she was killed because of this land, I'll hate it. I'll hate it all my life. Let the club have it, if they want it."

"Also, it gives Andree seventy-five thousand dollars."

Martha lifted her head. Her voice came clear. "Do I understand you, Cy? Are you saying that Andree or I killed Aunt Reuben because of that will? Are you crazy?"

"Seventy-five thousand is a lot of money, Martha."

"But Andree didn't have to kill her to get the money. Aunt Reuben was selling a hundred acres. I wouldn't have minded her selling that."

"Well, now. Suppose Andree knew this club wouldn't be interested in just a piece of the property? She runs around with those people, you know. This will," he tapped his pocket, "it's legal, gives her the money anyway, and she gets it now. There's the one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars in bonds to cover it, you see. That is—if Andree thought it was a valid will."

**I**T was a minute before Martha spoke. "I hadn't thought of that," she said, slowly. She sighed. "Oh, but it doesn't make sense."

But it made sense to Cy, and very ominous sense. It was Andree who had forced Martha into concealing their finding, the will and concealing the knowledge that Martha had already found Aunt Reuben under the Step. It was Andree—and Zachary—who had carried Martha unconscious to the house. It was Andree who had said Reuben was not there.

"Martha," said Cy gently, "suppose Andree says that the Step was closed and Aunt Reuben was not here when

she got here. Suppose Zachary says the same. Suppose Andree says that you found no purse. It isn't here now, is prove you did. And Reuben isn't here. And you did get knocked in the head hard enough to be unconscious. What's to prove you didn't just dream up the whole thing? Now, if she's found, let's say, in the gorge—what's to prove you ever found her under the Step? Are you," he said gently, "quite sure you did?"

"Oh, Cy, don't you believe me either?" Martha cried despairingly. "But I did find her! I did! Even if there's no proof of it, I did! She was dead. She was cold. Oh, Cy—she was stiff! Her cry rang out its horror if not its words, audible to the people above."

There was a small bit of proof, but Martha had already forgotten the fragment of feather which still lay, a silent and neglected witness, against the baseboard under Reuben's small, kidney-shaped writing table below the kitchen window.

Cy looked at her considerably. Yes, he thought, she did find Reuben under the Step. Martha could never have made it up that Aunt Reuben was—stiff. And certainly this little "will" was cause enough for—murder.

"I believe you, Martha," he said quietly. "Now is there anything more to tell me?"

"I can't think of anything," Martha spoke dully. "If I do, I'll tell you. I'm glad I'm glad you believe me, Cy. You'll find her, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll find her. Come on Martha. Let's get out of here. We've got to search the gorge thoroughly, with lights. You see, I don't think there's any doubt that whoever put Reuben under the Step did not mean her to be found here. I think she'll be found where it will look like an accident. Such as in the gorge. Maybe all we can do, if we find her there, is to let it go as an accident."

Martha flung herself to her feet. "Never," she cried. "Never! Her tears were forgotten, and every stubborn nerve of her was set in revolt. 'I saw her, I tell you. I saw her. And I'll keep on telling it and telling it until somebody believes me. I won't give up! I won't! And neither will you, Cy!'"

"No," said Cy. "I won't give up. But if that's the true story, then you're a suspect, Martha, just as much as Zachary, or Andree."

"Or Carol," said Martha flatly. "Don't let's forget Carol, sneaking back to the window. She climbed in, didn't she? She signed this will. She wouldn't want Zachary to lose this land, not that—that. And she's as hard as nails."

"Then why did she sign it? If she killed Miss Reuben, why didn't she destroy it? Now, Martha. Up the ladder. And don't mention finding these papers or that I have them. And tell Andree not to mention them. Maybe someone will let a remark slip about the will, as Carol did. Or someone may hunt for it. And there will be prints on the paper."

"Mine, Andree's, Aunt Reuben's, Carol's," said Martha, starting up the ladder.

"And maybe Zachary's," said Cy, following her. "Underneath yours."

"Zachary's?" said Martha, turning on the ladder. "That's what Andree kept saying. But Zachary would have destroyed the will. Of course he would. It doesn't leave him hardly anything."

"Not if he knew it wasn't legal. Because I don't think it is, Martha. It takes three witnesses in Connecticut to legalise a will. Even, I think, a handwritten will, though I'm not so sure about that. But if Zachary knew it wasn't legal—he's got a smart lawyer with him, remember—he might leave

it just because the leaving would seem to point away from him, if anything happened so he didn't get Reuben out from under the Step and into the gorge. That's why I don't want you to mention the will or the letter. Let's see who seems to know about them. Up you go, Martha. I've got a lot to do."

As they came up from the Step the little feather stirred slightly, and blew back an inch towards the Step. It was as if it knew it must get back under the Step, to prove Martha's story. But it made only an inch. Cy delayed long enough to scrape a little of the cellar dirt into one envelope and some of the dust from under the Step into another, reassure his memory that the handhold by which the riser was pulled up was too rough to hold prints, then he followed Martha. As a precaution he used his penknife to pull up the riser. The feather quivered and lay still.

**M**ARTHA came to her feet, blinking her eyes against the bright lights of the old kitchen. They were all sitting in a circle as if at a grim wake, while, silent, staring at her and at Cy; and Lottie, like a watchdog, was in a chair by the kitchen door. She had appropriated Andree's poker. Carol had chosen the bench behind the table, as if she had barricaded herself there.

"Nobody's said a word," said Lottie complacently.

"Martha," said Andree nervously. "Go wash your face and brush up a little. And give yourself, she thought, time to pull yourself together."

Martha looked down at herself. Her gold dress, her shoes were spotted with dirt from the drive, where she had fallen, and with dirt from the cellar, where she and Cy had crawled around the shallow, uneven excavation below her hands—ugh. So probably her face, too. She started for Aunt Reuben's room.

"Do you mind using the kitchen?" asked Cy. Only it was an order and Martha knew it. She went to the new kitchen, and Bill was right behind her.

"That's right, Cy," said Zachary. "Don't give her a chance to climb on to the window. There are some of us here that might think you were giving her a chance to get away."

"Are there?" asked Cy. "Who beside you?"

"Look here, Cy. We all heard what she said. 'Somebody's put her back! Back! mind you. Back means Aunt Reuben was there before, and Martha knew it. And if Martha knew it, it was because she put her there in the first place.'"

"Is it?" asked Cy. "How do you know?"

"Use your head," said Zachary violently. "If you've got enough of a one to use, that is. What we need here is some police with brains, and I want to go on record as demanding—and as head of the family I have a right to demand—that someone be called in. Someone, in fact, who isn't prejudiced in favor of Martha and Andree and against me."

"But that's just what I am about to do," said Cy. "That's why I asked Martha to use the kitchen. I want to telephone." He went across the room into Aunt Reuben's room.

"Watch out for that cat!" said Zachary. "I think it's gone crazy."

Cy looked into the room. "I don't think so," he said, and went in and closed the door behind him.

"Our yokel sleuth," said Zachary disgustedly.



"He's smart enough to find out you killed Miss Reuben," said Lottie.  
"Oh, shut up," said Zachary. "There's nothing to prove she's dead. And meanwhile, thanks to Cy, nobody's even hunting for her. She may be buried—"

"You've been saying that, Martha killed her," said Andrea. "Martha or me. Just so it's not you that is. Which way do you want it?"

"I said Martha hid her, that's all. I didn't say—"

"You mean Martha just sort of hid her under the Step, alone, for a—well, a joke, maybe? To make us all worry, and hunt, and—"

"She's dead," said Lottie softly. "She's dead. The cat knows."

"You and your superstitions," said Zachary.

"Superstition, is it? Listen! I'll hold the cat—the cat ain't afraid of me—and I'll stand in front of you, and I guarantee that—"

Carol came to life. "Don't let her! Don't let her!" she shrieked, springing to her feet. "I tell you, she's got the evil eye!"

Like a cat on a mouse, Lottie turned and marched over to the table, and Carol, terrified, shrank back as far as the window would let her. "Take her away," she whimpered. "Please. Somebody. Take her away."

Lottie raised her finger and pointed it. "Come just to the window, did you? Just peeked in, did you? And then what did you do? Tell me that."

But Carol was not there. She was face down on the floor, between the bench and the table, and her arms were over her head and ears.

"Well," said Lottie. "Maybe she did do it. Maybe—"

"I did not!" screamed Carol, raising her head long enough to answer and then burying it again.

"But if she did," went on Lottie, "you helped her, Zachary. Thomas Aquinas knows. We'll get the story out of him in time. You mark my words." Under the table Carol whimpered. They could just make out her words. "Don't let her. Please, everybody. Don't let her."

"Lottie," said Andrea. "I lay off the girl. If she did it, leave it to Cy. Get up off the floor, Carol, and be your age. What is it, anyway? Thirty?"

"It's twenty-nine," said Carol faintly, beginning to scurry to her feet. "I won't lie. Not tonight, anyway. Oh, I wish I'd never come here. I wish I'd stayed home. If only Zachary—"

"Just remember," said Zachary coldly. "I tried to stop you from coming. Now you see why."

"You mean you always knew your Aunt Reuben was going to be murdered today? You planned it!" There was no childish treble now. The cry came from a desert place of utter desolation.

Cy came out of Aunt Reuben's room, leaving the door open behind him. He held the cat in his arms, a quiet cat, but a bit uneasy. It struggled now in Cy's arms, but Cy caught its front paws and held it, speaking softly to it. Martha and Bill, presenting a united front, came in from the kitchen and stood close together.

"Gimme the cat," said Lottie, laying down the poker and getting to her feet. "Gimme the cat. Then we'll soon get to the bottom of this."

Carol, with a squeal, disappeared behind Bill's back.

"Just a minute, Lottie. I'll keep the cat." And Lottie, to the surprise of all, went back and sat down. Carol, with her eyes fixed on the cat, edged out a little from behind Bill's back.

"Make yourselves comfortable," Cy said to the three. "I've got quite a bit to say." He sat down himself, settled the cat with a pat and lighting now a lighted a cigarette with deliberation.

The cat, with sudden decision, stretched out on his knees and watched the room. Martha and Bill sat down on an old wagon seat by the hearth, not minding that it crowded them.

Carol, finding no room left for her on the same seat, tiptoed across to a chair and carefully tiptoed it back to sit on the side of Bill farthest from the cat, from Lottie and from Zachary.

"I wish," she said plaintively, "that I had the poker."

"Here, take this," said Bill, reaching behind him and giving her the hearth shovel. It had a long black handle and a heavy iron shovel. Carol took it with relish.

"Well, Cy," said Zachary. "What great thought has your mind given birth to?"

"In the first place," said Cy, ignoring Zachary. "Martha has told me that she opened the Step and found her aunt under a dead—"

"And I told you," said Zachary smiling. "I told you. That's why she had to tell you."

"She told me because she knew it was so," said Cy mildly. "Did you tell me because you knew it?"

"Now isn't that just like you, Cy. Why should I know it, as you say? I tricked Martha into admitting she knew it. I insisted the Step be opened. "I was the one who insisted on it," said Bill.

"Just a minute," said Cy. "As I understand it, Zachary, you are saying that you didn't know your aunt was under the Step?"

"That's right," said Zachary. "Dead right on the nail for once, Cy."

"But that you did know that Martha knew she was under the Step. That's right, isn't it?"

**Z**ACHARY was silent for a few moments. Finally he said, "You're all screwy. I said I tricked Martha into admitting she knew it. And that's all I said."

"But why try to trick Martha into admitting something unless you knew there was something to admit?"

"My good Cyrus, are you trying to be clever? It isn't your meter, you know," said Zachary, spreading his thin lips in what he thought was a sarcastic smile. "Why don't we just wait for all this until the police get here? I mean the real police."

"The police," said Cy. "are here. I am the police."

"Not what I mean by police," said Zachary.

"If you really wanted the police, what you call police," said Martha coldly. "You could have called them any time since dinner. You talked enough about it. Why didn't you?"

"Didn't I?" There was nothing but surprise in Zachary's voice. "I guess I didn't. At that I was so upset. Naturally, I must have just thought I'd done it. Or maybe I just thought it would be just Cy here, so what was the use?"

"Well," said Cy. "That's one explanation. Now—"

"More than that," said Andrea. "pow that Cy is here in charge, you really and truly want some other police. It's just because Cy is a friend and knows us all, that you're afraid. All right, maybe I'm a little bit afraid of him. But you're the one that's always been scared out of your pants of him, and you are now. That's why you're doing so much squawking."

"Is that so? Well, let me tell you—"

"Zachary, Andrea, Martha," Cy's voice was solid in the room. "If I have to take each of you over my knee and spank you, I can still do it now as I've done it in the past. I have

something to say, and I will not be interrupted again. Is that clear?"

"No, it's not!" exploded Zachary. "I'm represented by a lawyer here—"

"No, you're not," said Bill.

"Then I demand that I not be questioned until I've got a lawyer."

"Who said anything about questioning you?" asked Cy patiently.

"Then whatever it is you are going to do, I demand that we wait for the responsible police you've called before you do it."

"No other police," said Cy deliberately. "Have been called—yet."

"No other—Then what were you doing all that time in that room? Destroying evidence of Martha's, and Andrea's dirty work. I have no doubt."

"Zachary," said Bill, "take my advice and shut up. Remarks like that can be actionable."

"But I merely want to know—"

"I will tell you," said Cy. "I did not call in outside police, because I am now in possession of some evidence that points very definitely to Miss Reuben having been murdered. Don't interrupt, Zachary. After she was murdered she was hidden under the Step. Later she was moved and hidden again. When all this is aired in court—"

"Court!" It was Martha.

"Certainly A murder trial is held in a court. It will bring publicity to all of you, the innocent and the guilty alike. Miss Reuben was a well-known and well-loved figure, both in New York City and here. The family is old and distinguished. This house and the village are always good copy for the newspapers. At the slightest hint that Miss Reuben was murdered, that she is even dead, this house and grounds will be besieged by reporters and publicity seekers." He paused.

"Since I am, however, unfortunate Zachary considers it a friend of the family," he went on. "I wish to prevent as much of that as possible if it can be prevented. I wish to point out again that I am a police officer, and that I have the authority now in this room, tonight, to arrest one of you for murder, and to hold you all for questioning. Make no mistake, any of you. Whether you like it or not—I am referring to you, Zachary—I am first of all an officer of the law. I am in charge here, and I am in authority. I put you all on notice to say nothing that you do not wish to be used in evidence against you."

This was not the Cy they knew. This was not the life-long friend who had scolded them for their childish pranks and rescued them from the consequences. This was the law. In the eyes of all of them, so fixed upon him, there was fear. In Lottie's eyes alone there was more pride than fear. In the silence Thomas Aquinas mowed faintly, and dug an approving claw into Cy's knee.

"Now," said Cy, stroking the cat absently. "I am going to outline to you the known evidence against each of you, but I am not going to tell you what it is that I myself have as evidence. Remember, all of you, that this and much worse is what you will face in court. In court you will be torn to pieces; tripped up, gibed at, sneered at, your word questioned. The newspapers will dig up every last thing in the past of all of you and have a Roman holiday. It will not be pretty. At least here and now, before Miss Reuben is found and her death officially investigated as a certain and known death, it will be better if some things are made clear to all of you. After I have done that, I will find Miss Reuben and officially report her death."

"Find her?" breathed Martha. "You sound as if you knew—"



"I don't know," said Cyrus. "But Thomas Aquinas does. When he has stopped being frightened of these rooms and what happened in them, which he knows all about, he will go to her."

All the eyes staring so fixedly at Cy moved to the cat. Carol moaned, and drew up her feet on the rung of her chair.

"Cy," asked Bill, "may I say something? If Miss Reuben is dead, the immediate sale of this property to the club is out of the question. Even the normal settlement of the original will involves a considerable loss of time—six months at least. If it is proved she was murdered, the investigation and trial might tie up the title to the property indefinitely. Possibly if an agreement could be reached between all the possible heirs on the sale of the land, the probate judge might allow the matter to be expedited. As to that I don't know."

"I would agree to the sale of the hundred acres," said Martha. "Aunt Reuben wished it. The others want it."

**B**ILL was being a lawyer and nothing else. "That is not the point," he said brusquely. "The point is, what is the significance of the handwritten will, making a new disposal of the land, as a motive, or as a lack of motive, to kill Miss Reuben. In other words, did the killer consider the handwritten will not legal and therefore not dangerous, but knew it could become so if Miss Reuben lived to execute it; that applies to Zachary in particular. Or did the killer think the handwritten will valid; that applies to the two girls. Also, this legal knowledge or lack of it might also affect your ideas as to whether she met with an accident, even though she was hidden under the Step by someone."

No one spoke. After a few moments' pause, Bill went on speaking.

"Finally," he said, "I want to make clear my position here. I am representing the club in the matter of buying property, this or some other. This afternoon I refused to have any part of Zachary's furtherance of his plan to obtain the property from his aunt, because his plan involved fraud. I knew Miss Reuben only a few hours, but I conceived the highest regard for her, and I would not be party to her being hoodwinked. I still represent the club; under no circumstance will I represent Zachary. Not Carol, because she knew Zachary's plan. I told Martha that both she and Andree should get some legal representative, and I am empowered to act in her behalf."

"Will you act in mine, also?" Andree murmured.

"Yes. If you wish."

"Well, I don't see what I've done that you won't take me. I just merely peeked—" said Carol.

"You took up with Zachary. That was your mistake."

"Are you telling me," said Carol fervently,

"I will begin with Martha," said Cy quietly. "I will ask you not to interrupt, but I will give you a chance to ask questions or contribute any information you have."

"Except for Carol, Miss Reuben was not seen to anyone's admitted knowledge after three-thirty. Lottie left at that time, and only a few minutes later Miss Reuben went to her room and shut the door. Carol admits she saw her in her room later, but how long she stayed we don't know. You, Bill, and she went for a walk. That's right,

isn't it? What time did you start, do you know?"

"Fourish, I'd say," said Bill. "Carol was gone to the house fifteen or twenty minutes, while I was looking at the stuff in the loft of the barn. I did not see where she went during that time, but after that she was with me until we returned a little after half-past five."

"So you yourself have no alibi for that fifteen or twenty minutes? No one saw you?"

"Not that I know of."

"So you and Carol have each twenty minutes or so that no one can give you an alibi for?"

"Listen," said Carol frantically. "Not now," said Cy, and Carol, with a look like a spanked child, subsided.

"Martha and Andree went to lie down. Martha says she went to sleep, that Carol woke her, and Andree was not in the room. That leaves Martha and Andree with no alibi for the time around four o'clock and after. At three-thirty Zachary went down to the barn to go riding. Is there anything you want to say as to that, Zachary?"

"Why not? I was—well, to put it mildly, I was furious. I took the mare and rode down around the creek and

felt better. After all, Aunt Reuben was always threatening to cut me out of her will, so there was no point in my getting all worked up about it. So I changed in the barn and came back to the house about—what time was it, Andree? Cocktails, You remember."

"Five-thirty," said Andree shortly. "You were here before I was."

"I was here when you came in at five-thirty. I don't know whether or not you were here before. Just to keep the record straight, Cy."

"Girth gail," said Martha.

"What?" said Zachary.

"Sally has a girth gail. I showed it to Bill and told him—"

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Zachary. "I didn't notice or I would have put some salve on."

"That's what I mean," said Martha. "I forgot to tell Cy. There was salve on Sally hadn't been ridden."

"There was only a momentary pause. Then Zachary said, 'Now look who's trying to trip me up.'"

"I wasn't trying to trip you. I was going to tell you. Only you interrupted me. But Sally hadn't been ridden. I know."

"All right, all right," said Zachary. "So I didn't go riding. What difference does it make. I could have gone riding and killed her, when it comes to that. I join the rest of you—no alibi."

"With the difference that you lied, and lied very circumstantially," said Cy.

"Naturally I lied," said Zachary. "With everyone—even you—determined to make me the scapegoat, it's not to be wondered at."

"No," said Cy. "It's not to be wondered at. Now we come to the late afternoon, when Andree found Zachary here in the kitchen. After that, you were all here together until after the garage man came with Miss Reuben's car at nine o'clock. I am following the story that Martha told it to me. Is this correct?" One by one they all nodded.

"And after that, you all separated to search for her. Right away?"

Bill spoke up. "No. Zachary and the garage man went back to the barn to check if all the cars were there. Then Martha remembered the horse hadn't been fed. She and I fed the horse and looked in the fruit cellar, and then Zachary, here, told each of us where to go. It must have been nine-thirty before we started. Carol went with me down along the creek toward the main road. Carol stayed up

on the bank and I searched the creek bed. Perhaps she left me, I can't swear she didn't—"

"I did not! You old meany, you! I was up on that bank talking to you the whole time. I was scared. I was scared to be alone. It was dark."

"Well, I'm not saying you didn't. I'm just saying I wasn't paying any attention to you."

"Why—you—"

"All right," said Cy. "We'll count Carol as a possibility. But if she did this, she had Zachary to help her. Carol did not know how to open the Step, either to put Miss Reuben under it, in the afternoon, or to take her out, sometime after nine-thirty."

"Aren't you assuming rather a lot, Cy?" Zachary said sarcastically. "Not that I want to criticise the police, far from it. But there's not the faintest reason to believe Reuben was ever under the Step. Just Martha's story. Which she told after falling and hitting her head on a stone. Now don't say the cat was there and how did the cat get there. The cat's part of her story too. Now try to get around that one."

"Do you think, Zachary, if Martha goes on the stand and tells that story, the jury will think she made it up? Even a jury will know that Martha doesn't know how to lie. But it isn't going to be necessary to rely on that. Miss Reuben has on a brand new suit, just out of Andree's shop. The floor under the Step is dusty. When we find Reuben, it won't be difficult to prove that dust on her suit came from under the Step. Now, unless someone has something else to say, I am going to let the cat down. I ask you all not to make a move of any kind. In fact, any effort, any accidental move, on the part of any of you, I will note against you. Ready?"

"Wait a minute!" Carol screamed. She scrambled up on her chair and stood upright, the fire shovel ready in her hand.

Abruptly, Zachary sneezed. "Look, Cy," he said, "before we do that, my feet are soaking wet. Is there anybody here that you think isn't a murderer? Because I'd like to be allowed to go, with suitable escort, of course, to my room and get on some dry shoes and socks."

"Bill," said Cy, "and Lottie. Take your choice."

**L**OTTIE stood up. "Just you let me, Cy. Just you let me get him alone for ten minutes and I'll tear the truth out of him."

"Bill," said Zachary, "you're elected." So Bill, with a reassuring smile for Martha, got up and followed Zachary out of the room, up the Step and across the front room into the far bedroom wing. With their going, the cat suddenly stood up and watched, with flickering, uneasy ears.

"Now," said Cy softly, and put the cat down. "It's Zachary the cat's afraid of."

They all sat as if frozen. Lottie, by the door, her poker across her skimpy lap; Martha, on the settle by the hearth, her eyes wide and dark and full of pain; Andree, on the stool by Aunt Reuben's door, her face strained into a white tenseness; Carol, upright on her chair, stiff as a mannikin doll, with her fire shovel held straight out in front of her. Only Cy sat back, relaxed.

Thomas Aquinas twitched his tail, thought for a moment, and then sat down. Again he deliberated awhile, raised a tentative paw, licked it three times in a great hurry, and put it down.



Then he mewed once, softly, and got to his feet. Slowly at first, hesitatingly, with small indecisions in the way of looking this way and that, but finally with decision, he crossed the old kitchen towards the Step.

He sniffed along the edges of the opening, reared himself on both legs, and scratched. Martha let out a small sob, but still no one moved.

Then as if with a rush of thankfulness at finding something that belonged to the one he sought, he pounced under the small kidney table, and the cerise tip of feather stirred and blew into the room. He pounced on it, bit it, let it go, and raised his head.

"The feather," breathed Martha. "Cy, the feather from her hat. That's what made me cry out she was there again. It blew out when the Step opened."

"Sh-sh," said Cy.  
With a sudden spring the cat left the feather and jumped up the Step and disappeared into the far room. His low, sad wail came back to them sitting as if paralysed in the kitchen.

It brought them to life. As if on strings, they all rose at once. Even Carol scrambled down from her perch, not, however, relinquishing the shovel.

"Quiet!" said Cy with authority.

"Let me go first."  
Swiftly and silently he crossed the kitchen and mounted the Step, but the others were right behind him. Softly, one by one, they crept up the Step to stand inside the other room; only Carol stayed behind, content to peer around the corner.

The cat was already across the room. He was reared up against the corner cupboard, trying to get his claws in the crack between the doors. Failing that, he put his nose to the crack and mewed softly.

"Oh no!" cried Martha, flinching away. "She isn't there! She can't be!"

But Cy was across the room turning the wooden button that held the top doors. As the button turned they flew open, and Aunt Reuben's white head swung forward, her rigid body held upright by the still buttoned lower doors. With a hideous appearance of life it slid to the right till it rested against the side.

MARTHA let out a great cry and ran across the room. Cy, putting his body in front of Aunt Reuben, yarded her off with his hand.  
"Stop, Martha. Go back. Forgive me. If I'd dreamed she was here—Bill!" he called.

But Bill was already in the doorway, and behind him was Zachary in his stocking feet. Bill gave a choked cry, and started forward, but Zachary pushed him roughly aside. Andree ran to Martha, turned her around, and crowded her back toward the Step.

"Don't look, Martha," she said.

"Don't look. Don't look."  
Carol, a white ghost crawled into the room and sat down on a couch. From there she stared down the room—an avid horror, an avid curiosity, holding her spellbound. She was not even aware that Thomas Aquinas had taken refuge under her couch.

Zachary pushed forward. "Here, I'll help you. Hold her while I undo those doors."

But Lottie flashed down the room so fast she bumped him against the wall. "Don't you touch her!" she spat. It was Bill who moved forward to unbutton the lower doors.

"Wait!" It was Cy. "Don't touch it. Bill, I shouldn't have touched this one, but I didn't think. Here, you hold her while I—"

Bill, standing to block all sight of

Aunt Reuben from the room, watched as Cy, taking out his penknife, carefully turned the bottom button. Together they lowered the stiff little figure to the floor. Cy said to Bill, "Get a blanket. This is awful. I never dreamed—When did this cupboard get here anyway? It wasn't here yesterday."

Lottie fell on her knees beside the still figure. "Oh my lamb, my blessed lamb," she murmured.

Andree, abandoning Martha, ran to the couch where Carol sat and snatched up a coverlet that was folded there. Carol was turning a pale green. Andree said shortly, "Go and lie down. Go into the kitchen. Just don't pick this time to be a nuisance." She brought the blanket to Cy and stood looking as Cy knelt and spread it over the still little emptiness that had always been so alive.

The blanket rose and fell, making a small breeze. And silently, like a small ghost, Aunt Reuben's now hat rolled from beneath the cupboard and settled at Andree's feet.

Andree picked it up and stood there, stroking it. Her fingers followed the length of the little feather and stopped at the end. The cerise tip was broken off.

She stood there, the tears rolling down her face; Andree, who never cried, did not know she was crying now. Bill's voice roused her. He and Cy were mounted down by Aunt Reuben's head and the blanket was turned back. Bill was saying, "But that wound, Cy, is on top of her head. She couldn't fall and get such a wound. She was hit with something."

"I know," said Cy sombrely. "It's murder. No escape from it. Well, I'll get in touch with Doctor Connors. He's the coroner. We'll have to call an ambulance, too. It may be an hour before it gets here. Got to get these people out of here. Zachary, get away from that cupboard!"

Zachary, who was leaning into the cupboard with his hand on the door, spun around. "Now what's the matter?"

For answer, Cy stood up and threw Zachary backwards into a chair. "Get there till I tell you you can move. If you don't, I'll arrest you here and now and take you down to gaol. Is that clear?"

"Fingerprints, I suppose," scoffed Zachary. "As if all of us haven't got our prints all over it. We just moved it in here this afternoon."

"And you want to have a reason that your prints are on top. Don't think I won't remember it. Bill, I've got to believe you didn't have any part in this. Stay here while I telephone. Don't let anyone near the cupboard. Zachary didn't have time to touch the bottom doors."

"That's right," said Zachary. "As I told you, I'm to be the scapegoat."

Cy, half-way down the room, turned. "You're going to have your wish, Zachary. You're going to get all the police examination your heart could wish for. And all the publicity. And all the digging up of your past. I think you'll wish before some of these hard-boiled questioners get through with you, that we could have settled it among ourselves."

He went on down the Step, stopped long enough to pick up the feather, and they could hear his solid steps crossing the kitchen.

Gently Bill drew up the blanket and covered Aunt Reuben's head. He looked up to see Andree standing beside her. She said, "I loved her. I think I loved her more than any other person in my life."

Bill said nothing. For the unbidden, unwelcome thought flashed through his mind: Nevertheless, in an

angry, an ambitious moment you might have killed her. And could still be grieving now.

He looked over at the silent figure of Lottie, who knelt soundlessly her hands over her face, by the side of the blanket. She grieves, he thought. She really grieves. Kneeling there, silent and unmoving, she could be a statue of grief.

He leaned over and touched her arm, and Andree, unable to bear to see Lottie's face, turned and walked over to where Martha stood, white and tearless, unconscious that she stood, and stood alone, in the middle of the room. Lottie, Andree thought, poor Lottie. She had known Aunt Reuben all her life.

"Lottie," said Bill. "Come away. Come with me. I know how you must feel. But our grief can't help her now. There are things we must do. We must find out who killed her. You must help Cy."

Lottie dropped her hands from her face. It was the color of putty, and he thought how seamed and thin and lined it was. But there were no signs of tears on it, and no tears in her eyes.

"Things we must do," she said. "I was just thinkin' sittin' here about that. She was always doin' things. If there wasn't somethin' she had to do, she rashed around and made up somethin'."

Cy appeared in the doorway. "Come, everybody," he said. "Let's go back into the kitchen. Dr. Connors will get here as soon as he can."

They all turned. Martha, standing beside Andree, turned too suddenly. The blow on her head, all the painful events of the long night, the long time she had stood alone in a dull apathy of loss, were too much for her. She staggered, and then, as Andree reached up her hands to catch her, she sank to the floor in a heap of gold wool, her head hitting the rug with a soft thud.

Instantly the room was alive with action. Cy sprang forward from one side and Bill from the other. Andree, nearest, was already rolling her flat when the men got to her. Lottie ran and pushed Bill aside, catching Martha's feet and straightening them and pulling her skirt tidily down over her knees. Even Zachary got to his feet. Only Carol remained where she was.

"She's fainted," said Cy. "And she's freezing cold. Feel her hands. Take her feet, Bill. We'll build up the kitchen fire and get her in front of it. Lottie, get some blankets and a hot-water bottle. Only, Lottie," he raised his head, "no one is to go into Miss Reuben's room or into her bathroom under any circumstances. Not even you."

The men lifted Martha, while Lottie again adjusted the gold skirt chastely over her knees and said tartly, "Well, then I can't get her a hot-water bottle. It's in Miss Reuben's bathroom."

"Then I'll get it," said Cy. He and Bill carried Martha down the Step, Andree and Lottie following. Later Cy blamed himself bitterly, because he forgot Carol and he forgot Zachary, left together in the front room.

Zachary, too, forgot Carol or didn't see her still sitting in the shadow at the far end of the room. For he stood a moment, listening, then hunted for his handkerchief. He failed to find it, seemed to remember what had happened to it, and took hold of the end of his coat and approached the cupboard. With deliberation he wiped



the bottom doors carefully, all over, inside and out.

He stood a moment and deliberated about the top doors and decided against touching them. He stood back, looked the cupboard over, and started for the kitchen.

"They'll think it's funny," said Carol, "when there aren't any fingerprints at all on the bottom doors." She spoke flatly, almost without interest. "They'll know you wiped them."

At her first words Zachary started violently, and stood as if paralysed. "What are you doing here?" he said at last.

"Sitting," said Carol. "I've been sitting here for hours and hours. I'm so cold. If I could just go to bed."

"Look here, if you tell them I wiped off those doors—"

"What'll you do? Bash me on the head? That seems to be the thing to do around here."

He advanced towards her until he stood over her.

"Look here, you're in this thing, don't forget that. You're the last one that saw her. Through the window, or so you say. You say anything against me, and I'll tell that you've got a paper I've signed settling twenty-five thousand dollars on you on the old lady's death. And see if that doesn't show you've got a motive to kill her and destroy that will. What about that will, anyway? Why didn't you tell me about it?"

"What a heel you are, Zachary," she said tonelessly. "I did try to. I went to the barn and Bill was in the loft and you were hiding in the horse stall. I did try to tell you, but all you said was 'Sh-sh' and 'Shut up.' Maybe this is one time you'll wish you hadn't said 'Shut up' to me. Besides, you did hear me. You said, 'writing her lawyer?' and then you said 'Sh-sh' and 'Shut up' some more. So I shut up, only I called Bill down and we went for our walk. Walk. My legs ache. And I'm cold."

She got up and stood on the Step.

"Just remember this, Zachary Feuter, the next time it strikes your fancy to shout at me. If you get the old lady's money, I'm to get my twenty-five thousand cut. And if I don't get it, and you're alive, I'll sue you for it, and I'll tell what it was you were saying me to keep quiet about. And before I get through with you, you and your fancy Fenner name and your fancy Fenner family will look like a pile of garbage."

She started down the Step and nearly bumped into Cy.

"Forgot you too," Cy said shortly. "The more fool me. Well, it's too late now. Come down into the kitchen and stay here."

"I've been having a good time," said Carol. "I've been calling Zachary names. And I know names you never heard of, brother."

Of a sudden Cy smiled at her. It was a warm, friendly smile. "I hope I hear them some time," he said.

They had carried Martha to the bench in front of the fire. Cy had brought blankets and a pillow from Reuben's bedroom, and Martha lay on the bench, swathed in blankets, conscious but too tired to move or speak. Bill was beside her, just looking at her. Lottie and Andree were in the new kitchen, and the smell of fresh-ground coffee was in the room.

"Coffee!" Carol exclaimed. She crossed the room to the new kitchen and said plainly, "You haven't got an old bone around I could gnaw, have you?"

Bill turned from Martha and spoke to Cy. "I've been thinking, Cy," he said. "That long narrow wound. I am remembering something. Come here a minute."

He went with Cy to Comfort's cupboard on which the old silver and pewter stood, and pointed to a tall silver candlestick on a top shelf.

"I looked at this silver this afternoon, just before dinner. I know quite a bit about old silver, and among the pieces I looked at for hallmarks was this candlestick. Don't touch it. It has a piece of brown felt glued to the bottom. The felt is loose and it's wet. Three of these pieces have felt on them. None of these other felts is wet. I thought nothing of it. I thought merely that this candlestick but not the others had been washed after it was cleaned. But now I wonder. It's got a narrow blunt base. It's old Sheffield, which means that it is plated over solid copper, and it's heavy. Why not ask Lottie if she washed it?"

"Lottie," called Cy. "Come here a minute."

**L**OTTIE appeared in the doorway, with Andree and Carol behind her. Lottie was carrying a tray of cups and saucers, Andree a plate of sandwiches.

"This candlestick," said Cy. "When did you wash it?"

"Wash it?" said Lottie, putting down the tray she carried and wiping her hands on her apron. "Wash it? Ain't never washed it. No, I don't need to come. I know every piece of silver in that cupboard. Ought to. Been polishing it for thirty years. That's the candlestick with the loose felt. So happens I polished all that silver Thursday."

He took a handkerchief from his pocket, reached up and wrapped it around the candlestick, and lifted the stick from its place on the shelf.

"My fingerprints will be on it," Bill said.

"Not thinking of fingerprints," said Cy. "Not if it was washed after it was used. But the laboratory might find something in the felt from the scalp."

"It was out of place." It was Martha, stirring on the couch so that her face was turned to them through the narrow splinters of the back. "It was on the top shelf where it belongs, but it was out of place. I noticed it when I came in before we—we had our cocktails. I put it back where it belongs. Oh, Cy, you mean—that—that candlestick—"

"Now now, Martha. We know nothing of the sort. Not for certain. I'm just thinking. That top shelf is very high. Who would reach that high for a weapon? Only a man—or a tall woman."

There was silence in the room.

"Lottie," said Cy, "how do you get it down? From a chair?"

"No. I use the kitchen meat tongs," said Lottie. "Been doing it thirty years. To put it back—Look, I'll show you."

She came forward again, wiping her hands unnecessarily again on her apron.

Martha, too tired to raise herself to watch Lottie, nevertheless saw it anyway. She saw it in a strange and somehow hideous pantomime. Lottie stood in front of the cupboard, and the lamp-light struck her sideways, so that as she reached her arms above her head, her hands and arms threw swollen shadows on the wall.

"I stand on tiptoe," Lottie said. "I hold the candlestick in one hand—a shadowy flat clenched—and with the other I shove it back till it won't fall off when I let go. Over the clenched fist a snake's head darted, swayed, and then the black pantomime fell slowly, sinking down till it merged with the long black shadow that was

suddenly not Lottie's but the murderer's shadow standing there.

Martha gave a strangled, shuddering gasp. But yet that's not right, she thought. Aunt Reuben was killed in the bedroom. Now how did she know that?

She sat up. "Cy," she said, "there's something I know that I keep forgetting—"

At that moment, a car purred smoothly past the house and stopped. "That will be Doc Connors," said Cy. "Maybe he can tell us something definite."

Doctor Connors came in, trying to look subdued and respectful in the presence of death, but succeeding only in looking remarkably bouncy and cheery and full of reason and fresh air. He looked around the room and said, "Sorry, everybody. A great pity. She was a wonderful woman. Don't know how Fennerville will manage without her. Who wants quiet week ends anyway? Martha, I'll look at you in a minute. Where's Miss Reuben, Cy?"

"In the front room. Here comes the coffee. Take a cup, Doc. Be with you in a second."

He went into the new kitchen and was gone some minutes, and when he returned there was a bulge in his pocket. It was a jar of silver polish. He came back into the room, took a cup of coffee and a sandwich, and said, "Any time, Doc."

The doctor drained his cup and mounted the Step, carrying his bag; and Cy, his coffee and sandwich in one hand and the candlestick held carefully in the other, followed him. Silence followed their going; no one left in the old kitchen wanted to be deprived of hearing what was said in the other room.

So they all heard the doctor's startled cry. "What's all this? When did this happen?"

"This afternoon, I think between four and five-thirty. I'd like your opinion."

"She's been hit on the head. A real wallop. Cy, why wasn't I called sooner?"

"She was hidden. We found her in that cupboard there."

"In that cupboard? That corner cupboard? There was a silence, and those in the kitchen could feel the doctor staring at the cupboard. "That's a new cupboard. New, and old. Ha. You mean the doors were shut? And she was inside?"

"That's right."

"Well, Cy, you realise I should hope, that Miss Reuben didn't walk into that cupboard, close four doors button them shut on the outside, and then hit herself with something so hard it killed her. Oh, you do realise. Because I'm betting after she got that knock on the head she didn't move again. The skull is broken. This is a case for the police, Cy."

"I'm the police, Doc."

"That's right, so you are. And I'm the coroner. So help me, I'm supposed to make an independent investigation. Cy, must I do that? Anyway, what did happen?"

"We don't know. Take a look at this candlestick. Could that have done it? No, don't touch it. I want to get it tested."

"If I don't touch it, how can I tell—" the doctor began testily, and then changed to, "Guess you're right. Better be official. Um, Yes. Think it could. Better make a test of the wound for any foreign particles, don't you think? Then if there was a nile of skin on the candlestick—Been washed I see. Some body concealing evidence?"

"Could be. But could that wound



have been an accident, do you think?" "Accident. That would? Not unless she stood on the ceiling and fell on something, it couldn't. Now if you'd found her in the gorge — But you didn't."

"Suppose she pitched off her rocking-chair and hit something. Say the Step."

"The Step. You Pennersville people've got that Step on the brain. Any objection to moving her, Cy? Or have you got to have photographs and all? Don't see why. She wasn't killed lying here, that's certain. The ambulance is — There it is. I bet, coming up the gorge now."

"I'll let them in the front door," said Cy. "And I'll call Brannon in Hartford. He's a chemist for the state laboratory. I want this candlestick tested, and the wound. Let me know as soon as you can what they find out. I'll be here. Could be just an accident, after all. Maybe somebody just threw something."

"And kept her hidden half a day? Funny kind of way to treat an accident."

"Not if the person was scared. Maybe you'd better be the one to call Brannon. Tell them we're sorry it's the middle of the night and Saturday and all that, but we want an examination of the candlestick and the wound tonight, and one that will stand up in court if it has to."

AGAIN the doctor assumed his most official voice. "You're dead right. Ha. Hid her all day. Got to be a good reason for that before I'll swallow it. To my eye, this bruise looks too narrow at the bottom to have been made by the Step. That Step is two inches thick and has a rounded edge. However, if she pitched forward hard enough. But how could she pitch forward that hard? Not by accident, she couldn't. She'd have to be given a terrific shove. Howsoever, I'll look at the Step before I go."

"Just don't put your prints on it. And Doc, keep this under your hat."

"A lot of use that is, with Minnie the Gabbler on the telephone exchange. As it is, she's all of a buzz. Time you telephone Brannon you want a candlestick and head wound examined, just look for the reporters on the doorstep, is all I've got to say."

"But you're to telephone Brannon."

"Oh, so I am. Good thing you reminded me." There was the noise of feet outside. "Come in, boys."

Lottie rose from her chair and went into the front room. "I'm going with her, Cy. I won't leave her."

"No, Lottie, I'm counting on you. You go back. I've got to go now."

Lottie went back into the old kitchen, and stood by the door watching. There were lights and cars and movement and a long stretcher slipping into an ambulance. The lonely little hat was tossed in as if it had been an old shoe. The tears streamed down the thin creases of her face, and she wiped them away with her apron.

Down by the doctor's car, Cy and the doctor were talking. About what? Not that it mattered. All had already been said. Did Cy realize they had all heard?

Down by the car, Cy was making it clear that he did realize. "I've got some other things here for you to send to the laboratory, Doc. I didn't want the others to hear about these."

"You mean they heard all that other? You meant them to? Holy Great Scott! Did I say things I shouldn't? You should've warned me. A doctor's bedside manner isn't just the same when he's not at a bedside."

"Didn't want to warn you. I wanted

you to be natural. You wouldn't have been if I'd told you they could all hear. Now what I want you to do is this. Here are two envelopes. One contains dirt from the collar floor; the same dirt should be on her purse. The other contains fluff from under the Step; it ought to be on her clothes and hair and hat. I want to be absolutely sure she was ever under the Step. When was she killed, Doc?"

"Between four and six, I'd say, if that helps you any. Can tell you better later, maybe."

"Well, if I've got that time to work with, and the time after nine-thirty in the evening when they were all out searching for her and she was moved from the Step, I should be able to narrow down the suspects. What gets me is, when she was taken out of the Step, why was she put in the cupboard? Why not get her out of the house, down the gorge?"

"There's a light under that porch roof outside the kitchen door."

"Why not turn it off? However, Martha's story is that she came back about ten-thirty to telephone for troopers to help search but didn't call them. She says she thought of the Step, and Reuben was under it, and she pulled her out. That Reuben was cold and already stiff. That she ran out, somebody hit her. Andree found her, went to get help, and ran into Zachary by the kitchen door. He and Andree carried Martha into the house, and Andree says Reuben was not on the kitchen floor. So if all that is true, it was in those few minutes around eleven o'clock that she was moved from the Step to the cupboard. So while it narrows the time, it leaves us with all the suspects."

"Andree, Martha, Zachary," said the doctor, waving at the ambulance as it pulled away. "I can't see Martha doing it."

"No. But Zachary would like to put it on her."

"Zachary. Now there's the boy for my money."

"We've got to avoid the pitfall of wishful thinking, Doc. Now another thing. After I've gone to the house, I want you to drive over to the barn, go up to the window by Miss Reuben's room and take a bag you'll find hanging on the shutter. It has Reuben's purse in it, and her writing tablet and some articles that belong to each one in the house, wrapped and labelled. Take them down here to the station. I want the writing tablet tested for prints inside and out. And the purse, before it goes to Hartford."

He shifted and chuckled. "I'm just waiting for Carol to discover her lipstick's gone. That's one reason I'm keeping them all huddled in the kitchen. I don't want them to find out I've been thieving. Here's the candlestick. Don't let it get rubbed. And the jar of silver polish."

"And you want all this done in fifteen minutes. Look, Cy, we can get the prints done pronto, provided we can get Johnnie Simms to wake up enough and he's sober enough to see straight through his microscope. I can get the scrapings from the wound, provided there's a policeman handy to stand by me while I do it. But the scrapings and the candlestick and the polish and the dust tests for Hartford, that's another matter. Because if you think those boys are going to get up in the middle of the night to examine a rag and a bone and a hank of hair, you're crazy. And if you think they'll do it on Sunday, you're even crazier."

"I know," said Cy. "And, of course, they wouldn't listen to me," he said craftily. "I just thought maybe you could pull a miracle. Any way you look at it, this story is going to be a sensa-

tion. Any extra effort will come in for its share of the — the glory."

"Well now," said the doctor complacently. "I'm not saying but what I might be able to pull something. So happens my Ethel runs around with the son of one of the big men there. So maybe I can pull something. Might even run over myself to Hartford with the things tonight."

"You're a prince, Doc. Two had I don't get sick often so you could get some reward. Just keep off the phone as much as you can, except I want to get the report on the prints as soon as possible." He smiled in the darkness, knowing that now he was really going to shine in the doctor's best efforts, because what he was now going to throw was a bombshell.

"Oh, and by the way," he said carelessly. "Watch your step there by that bedroom window. Keep your flashlight on the ground, and see you don't touch that wire or disturb it in any way."

The doctor's eyes grew round. "Wire? What wire?"

"To a tape recorder," said Cy. "The microphone is on the hinge of the door to Miss Reuben's bedroom, but the machine is outside on the terrace under the first oak."

"A tape recorder," breathed the doctor, his eyes peeping. "Well, I'll be—I Cy, I've underestimated you. I've thought you were just a policeman for drunks and speeders."

"Drunks and speeders are what I mostly get, thank goodness. I'm not much used to murders, and that's a fact. Ordinarily I'd call in outside help. But this isn't just any murder. I know all these people. I know how each one thinks and what each one's likely to do. Outsiders wouldn't. But if I get evidence out of anything that's said, I don't want to be open to dispute afterward."

"But how'd you do all that and them not know? All that running around. How do you know what they're doing when you're not there?"

"Lottie. Lottie can count people's breathings. As for me, I've been in and out that window of Aunt Reuben's till I've got a cramp in my knees. Had to keep it covered by a board, too, because Carol's prints ought to be there, and maybe it'll show that she climbed in. We'll have to get that whole room fingerprinted." And the papers, too, he thought to himself, for he was not willing to let them off his person.

"Now Doc, Lottie's watching us, so I can't get these things for you myself. I'll keep them from watching you, but don't be reckless with that flash. And watch your step, old man."

"Step," muttered the doctor, climbing into his car. "Step. You've got the word Step on the brain. The Ferner Step didn't kill her, I'll take my oath on that."

"And telephone me here as soon as you get news of any kind. Minnie or no Minnie. You can be as cryptic as you like. Good hunting, Doc."

CY started up the slope to the house, but at the kitchen door turned to watch the doctor creep his car towards the barn. He smiled again. Doc was as excited at a kid with a new bicycle. He would get that lab man out of bed if he had to drag him out.

Cy turned again and went through the door into the kitchen, squeezed Lottie's shoulder and said to the faces turned towards him. "Everybody had something to eat? Good. We've still got a long night ahead of us."

The telephone rang. With a look



around that said nothing at all. Cy went into Aunt Reuben's bedroom. They could hear his voice. "Yes, Minnie. . . . Oh yes, yes. Of course she was found. That's to say, she never was really lost. By the way, Minnie, if Dr. Connors calls in—you know he's on that accident, and he may want to get hold of me—just switch him on to me here."

It's Martha. She's been having chills and things. Tell him we've got her bundled up by the fire, and Lottie and I are here, but I'd like to talk to him. . . . Temperatures? Should I take her temperature? Then I'll do that. Good-bye."

They could hear the drop of the phone, and the words, "That Minnie. Why do we bother with a newspaper?" What they could not hear was the doctor outside the window pointing to the wire and mouthing unheard words, and Cy pointing across the floor and up the side of the door to the kitchen where a small robot like a package of cigarettes was hung by a bit of adhesive in the dark near the hinge. Its listening ear was turned into the old kitchen.

The doctor made gestures of hands and shoulders indicating surprise, admiration, and conspiratorial partnership, and a hideous grimace that could have been approval. He held up the bag, received a nod from Cy, and disappeared. Cy went back into the old kitchen, leaving the door ajar.

Zachary, who had been lying on his back on the bench, reared up. "I'm all through with this amateur third degree," he said. "I'm going to bed, and I'd like to see you stop me. Look at Carol, you big bully, asleep in her chair. Well, at least she can sleep."

"Clear conscience, supposedly," said Cy. "She ain't got a conscience," said Lottie.

"I think she's got adenoids," said Andrew. "Look how her mouth hangs open. It's very unbecoming. In fact, asleep, she looks like a mess."

Carol's mouth snapped shut and her eyes snapped open. She looked at Andrew. "I—I do?"

"You do. When you're not really asleep sometime, you ought to wake yourself up and look at yourself asleep."

"Wake myself up and—?" One could see Carol's brain floundering around in the devious bypaths of that one. She came up with a success.

"Well, smarty. I know one time you weren't asleep when you said you were. I saw you in the kitchen—the real kitchen the one where you cook—why do you keep calling this room the kitchen? It's awfully confusing—anyway I saw you in the real kitchen. I saw you through the window when Bill and I came out of the barn. So there, now!"

ANDREE retorted smoothly. "That was a good hour later," but something turned over in her stomach. "I'd had my nap. I came out to put the goose in the oven. Just what were you doing for a whole hour, instead of fifteen or twenty minutes like you told us first?"

"Me? Me? Well, I couldn't find Bill and so I hunted for Zachary because I was sure he was there because the horse was there because I had to tell him about the will, didn't I? And he was there and I found him and then I had to try to make him stop saying 'Sh-sh' and 'Shut up' and—"

She stopped, stared with frightened eyes at Zachary, and belatedly came to her own rescue. "Who says it was an hour? It was only twenty minutes or

maybe half an hour, like I said. Bill. Tell them it wasn't an hour before I yelled yoo-hoo at you in the loft. They'll believe you."

"I can't see what difference it makes whether it was fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, thirty minutes, or an hour," said Bill. "But it could have been an hour. I found a set of three volumes called 'History of the Indian Tribes of North America.' In color, mind you. Magnificent. No mildew or anything. I have an idea the books may be valuable. Anyway I was absorbed in them. Does it make any difference?"

"This difference," said Cy. "That we find out that first Carol lies a little, then she lies a little more, and that it finally comes out that she told Zachary of the handwritten will. It certainly puts Zachary into the picture, and it puts Carol in with him. Because Zachary, if he planned to get hold of that will, would want to involve Carol along with him. I should think, if only to ensure her keeping her mouth shut."

"I never did. I never did!" Carol cried frantically. "I never came back here again! I wish I'd never come at all! That's what I wish!"

"Why did you come?" Cy asked smoothly, but the corner of his eye never left Zachary. Zachary, who hadn't exploded or shouted or interrupted Carol once. Thinking up his defence, probably, thought Cy, even as he went on to say, "I gather you weren't invited. That you weren't even—very welcome. To Zachary, that is."

"Why would I be?" Carol said hotly. "What he wanted was to get the old lady to sell and get his cut of the land and tell me he didn't have any money to pay me, that's what he wanted. But if there was going to be any money lying around paid for that land, I was going to get mine, and don't kid yourself I wasn't. Even if I had to show the paper to the old lady. I figured she'd pay, just to stop the scandal."

She went on, her voice rising. "Scandal! Why should I care about scandal? It isn't my scandal. I've got a paper where Zachary promised to pay me a whop of money to keep my mouth shut about something. Look, I'll show it to you. Why should I care any more?"

Her hand dived into the V at her neck, but paused.

"See," she said. "Did anyone search the old lady for that will? It could be hidden on her."

"If it is, it will be found," said Cy, holding out his hand.

She withdrew her hand from her dress. "No. If anybody sees this paper, Zachary won't pay the money. That's what he told me, anyway, when he gave it to me. And now the old lady's dead and he gets this land and will sell it and besides there's a lot of money—hundreds of zeros there was on that will—" She paused.

"That will. He doesn't get the land. He doesn't get anything. Not enough to sneeze at. She paused again. "And that just tickles me to death," she finished calmly.

Still no sound, no movement from Zachary, nor did his face, bored, sardonic, impassive, tell anything to all those sitting with their eyes fixed fascinated on him. Cy wiggled his fingers.

"Give me the paper, Carol," he said. "That paper is evidence that you had a motive in seeing to it that Reuben's property went to Zachary, and you have already admitted you saw her making out a new will. I can, of course, take you down to the police station and have you searched. Do you prefer that?"

"Brother," said Carol smugly "parading around in front of every-

body with practically no clothes on is my business. It doesn't frighten me."

"Perhaps, come to think of it," said Cy, as if he hadn't heard. "I'll just let you keep it. I'm sure Zachary won't kill you just to get possession of it. He'd be the first and only suspect if you got killed."

"Killed?" Carol opened her eyes so wide that the whites showed. "Of course I'd get killed. In this family of murderers? And I never thought of it. Well, it's lucky I haven't got it."

Cy said swiftly, "Where is it?"

"I gave it to the old lady. It was part of the bargain."

"What bargain?"

"Oh," vaguely, "just a bargain we made. The old lady and I. She liked me, you know."

"Carol," said Cy sternly, "don't you realise that to conceal evidence at a time like this is a criminal offence in itself? And don't say you aren't concealing evidence, because I have absolute proof that you are."

"You mean that you found the paper I signed? The will?"

INSTANTLY, the room was so still that the sudden scraping of Zachary's bench was like a screech in the room.

"Stay where you are, Zachary," said Cy quietly, but Lottie leaned forward and took a fresh grip on her poker.

"Where's my shovel?" said Carol. "I want my shovel. Please somebody."

"Nobody's going to hurt you," said Cy. "At least nobody will as soon as you've told all you know. You say you signed the will?"

"You mean you didn't find it? You're just making me tell you things you don't know?" Courage had returned to Carol, and a certain obstinacy. "Well, I'm not telling you unless you tell me you've found the will."

"Suit yourself," said Cy indifferently. "You've already said you signed the will. As witness, naturally. So if it isn't found, you seem to be the only person that ever saw it, the only person who knew about it, and therefore the most likely person to have come back later and destroyed it, killing—"

"Stop!" shrieked Carol. "I didn't. I tell you! Why should I? She paid me for it. Look, I've got the cheque right here," she fumbled in the neck of her dress. "That's what I've got in here. Her cheque. See? Here it is."

Her hand came out of the neck of her dress with a narrow slip of blue paper which she handed to Cy. Cy took it, and read it to himself, calmly. As if he was unaware of the curious gaze of the others in the room.

"That's a lot of money," Cy said at last, "to pay for just a signature to a will. She could get anybody at all to sign it for nothing."

"That's what she told me. But I told her I'd be glad to sign it and welcome. But when I showed her that paper Zachary signed, she asked me what I'd take for it. And I took it. I said to myself ten thousand in the hand is worth twenty-five thousand in the never-never land. And if I gave the paper to the old lady, would she ever make it hot for him. So I signed the will and was glad to and she said I could sign the real one with my right name at dinnertime. And the old lady put the will in her writing case and I gave her a kiss and told her she was a swell old dame. Of course, if I'd known the old lady was going to be murdered as soon as I left her, I'd of stayed. But how could I know? So I patted the cat and climbed back out of the window—don't you people need screens? I thought everybody had flies, even rich folks—and that's all I know."



And I don't care what that old witch over there with the poker says or does. I haven't got anything more to tell.

"I hope for your sake that you have told all you know," said Cy.

He went on, his look cold and his voice stern.

"You should realise fully," he said, "just where you stand, and if you have anything more to tell, your best safety is to tell it now. Didn't you realise that your fingerprints would be all over that will, along with your signature, proving you were in that room sometime between three-thirty and the time she was missing? Didn't you realise that your fingerprints would be on that paper Zachary gave you, a paper promising to pay you twenty-five thousand dollars on his inheriting the property, a paper that pays you to keep still about a fraud on a fire insurance company? That your fingerprints are all over the inside of that bedroom, which you never entered at any time earlier than three-thirty or later than five, and that it was during that time she was killed?"

He waited, but Carol only stared at him. She seemed unable to speak.

"Oh yes," said Cy, driving in the sword. "I found the paper, Zachary's promise-to-pay. I have it safe, and the cheque-book stub for your cheque, dated today. It will all make a pretty story in court, won't it? An insurance fraud on Zachary's part, blackmail on yours, which involves you in the fraud, and a dead woman who was going to disinherit Zachary and cause you to lose twenty-five thousand dollars. Blackmail and insurance fraud. Plenty of motive there for murder, Carol, did you tell Zachary you sold that promise-to-pay to Miss Reuben?"

Carol's chin was shaking. She put up her hand to stop it, opened her mouth to speak, let out a gurgle, and shook her head.

"You'd better tell the truth, and tell it fast," said Cy, and now his voice was harsh. "It's going to be very tough for you, when you get on the witness stand and say, 'Yes, you're going to have to—and have a defence attorney get at you. Do you realise what it will be like? He'll say, 'So you just lied a little bit the first time. So you just lied a little bit more the second time. So you just lied a little bit more the third time. So twenty-five thousand was just a little bit of blackmail, was it?'"

Cy's voice rose. "So why," he'll say, 'aren't you still lying? Why didn't you think to yourself, if I take the will and the promise to pay me twenty-five thousand dollars, think what a great big blackmail I can collect from Zachary? Maybe you had to kill the old lady, but—'"

"No!" burst from Carol. "No!"

In her chair, Andree began to shake. Cy didn't need Lottie's powers. He had inherited his own brand, a lot worse than Lottie's. Because Carol couldn't have done it. She didn't take the will or the promise-to-pay, because Cy had them. She couldn't have hidden Aunt Reuben under the Step without help.

She closed her eyes and tried to control her shaking. Because my turn will come, she thought. Cy will do this to me, too. She heard his cold, even voice going on.

"That you have told this to me voluntarily, Carol, will work in your favor. But not if you are still concealing anything, anything at all. Because we'll find out. The prosecutor will say 'So you just lied again a little bit. But suppose you've lied a really big lie. Suppose you didn't mean to kill her, but you did, and got frightened and forgot to take the will and the

promise-to-pay and ran to Zachary and he helped you hide her under the Step.' Because if you are caught lying again, or concealing anything more, that is what you will be accused of, Carol."

Bill opened his mouth to say that if she had called Zachary in to help her Zachary certainly would have destroyed the will; but he closed it without speaking. Cy was doing all right. In fact, he was wonderful.

"Now," said Cy, "do you know anything more?"

Carol's throat worked; she shook her head; finally she whispered, "No."

"Did you tell Zachary about the new will?"

"No."

"Did you tell him you'd sold his promise-to-pay to Miss Reuben?"

"No."

"Exactly what did you tell him?"

"I told him—" The voice began faintly, but it grew stronger as she went on. The story began as a trickle but ended in a flood.

"I told him—Well, I tried to tell him, anyway, because I got to thinking I'd got my money, more than I'd ever really expected to get anyway, and anyway I was only keeping that paper so if he got the old lady's property he'd have to marry me to get it back the paper I mean, only now I wouldn't marry him on a bet and I'm glad of this chance to tell him I haven't got the paper any more so he won't need to marry me or murder me to get it, but anyway after the old lady gave me the cheque I felt pretty good and not mean towards Zachary any more and I thought maybe he'd better know about the will and maybe he could go in and smooth the old lady down or something."

CAROL paused for breath but went on again promptly. "I couldn't know he was going to kill her, could I? Anyway, when I got to the barn he was hiding in the stall and kept pointing his finger up into the loft where Bill was and saying 'Sh-sh' and 'Shut up' and I—it made me sort of mad at him all over again, so I didn't, I did, I mean, I shut up. I thought for once," an echo of her old spirit came into her voice, "it served him right if I shut up."

There was a pause, and in it Zachary spoke with quiet reasonableness. "Cy, could I ask a question? Or am I interrupting Carol? She seems to have run down for the present, though I assure you if you encourage her a little she'll give you the whole hard-luck story of her life."

"Shut up," said Carol. "And is that a pleasure to say. And I have got something more to say, too."

Her voice hit a pathetic note. "Like I said, I'm awful tired of you. I don't know why I bothered with you as long as I did. I'm not thinking about you. I'm thinking about myself. I've got a job, if any of you here knows what that is. And I've got to keep it. I've got to pose for photographs tomorrow afternoon. It doesn't take much when you get to be my age to get shuffled off for a twenty-year-old cutie. I've got to look like something tomorrow. I've got to eat, you know, after all this is over. I've just got to go to bed, Cy."

Andree said, "You can sleep all day tomorrow. You don't pose on Sunday, do you? Tomorrow is Sunday." For Carol's histrionics had failed to impress Andree. What had Aunt Reuben said? "She isn't stupid at all."

Carol's eyes opened wide. Her voice rose to its old treble. "You mean tomorrow's only Sunday? That I'm stuck

here for a whole other day? I can't. I simply can't. My nerves. They'll be simply shattered. Shattered."

"You can go to bed," said Cy. "You know where to go. In the wing."

Carol turned the baby stare on him. "Alone? Way off there alone? In a houseful of murderers? What do you think I am. Why can't I just go to bed in there?" She pointed to Aunt Reuben's bedroom.

"You can't sleep there," said Cy inexorably. "You can lie down on that other bench behind the dining table. If Zachary will move off it, I'll keep this cheque for now. You can't cash it anyway until the estate is settled. And I'll let you go home in the morning. Probably."

"Honest? Cross your heart? Gee, Cy, that's white of you. 'Cause I didn't kill the old lady. Honest I didn't. 'Cause why? Let me tell you something, Cy. 'Cause if I was going to kill anybody, it wouldn't be an aunt. Because I live with an aunt. I know I told Martha I had a swank apartment all doo-da and lah-da."

Zebra paper in the bathroom, thought Martha drowsily, then she heard what else Carol was saying.

"That's just the one I've always wanted to have. I'll say this for my coming here, I don't care so much for the lah-da any more. I just want to stay with my aunt. She lives in one of those walk-up houses in Brooklyn. You get to the top floor and go down the hall and into this big kitchen, see. And you can sit there in the window and see all the boats come in and I think about all the rich people in them and think what a wonderful time they must be having—"

She stopped, nobody spoke, and she went on. "Well, now I know maybe they're all just the same mess of trips I am. I used to envy Andree swanking about. I thought she must have a wonderful life, having money and the right clothes and knowing all the swells. Phooey."

There was a quiet, infinite contempt in the single word. There were no histrionics in it. Andree could see the wastepaper basket into which Carol dropped her. It had old cigarette butts in it.

"And here all this while I've been such a fool. I've hated having to live with my Aunt Emma. She's fat and the halls smell of cabbage and I have to keep my good clothes locked up in my closet so the kids won't dress up in them and they won't get cabbage smells in them and the coffee dust that comes up from the wharves won't grit them all up. But Aunt Emma's been like my mother since I was eleven and my money helps pay for the fat and so I just don't run out. I've got to keep my job so I can help pay the rent. I've got to get my sleep. Do you know what I've been thinking about? I'm thinking how good it'll be just to smell the cabbage in that hall—"

"This is all very touching," said Zachary. "Don't say I didn't warn you, Cy, about giving her a chance to spill the story of her life. You ought to try Hollywood, Carol."

"I did," said Carol. "With my face and figure, why wouldn't I? And what did it get me? They said I had the looks but I couldn't act."

"And how mistaken they were," said Zachary. "They should have seen your performance just now. Don't let me hurry you, but are you through? I'd still like to ask Cy, here, a question."

"I don't," said Carol, "care what you do only get off that bench."

She got up and went over to Martha, who looked up at her, smiled, and in-



dictated the extra blanket around her feet.

"Thanks," said Carol, and took the blanket, and went around the table. She said to Zachary, "Get up," wrapped the blanket around her, lay down on the bench, and disappeared from view.

**Z**ACHARY came forward, he moved stiffly, he was dirty, bedraggled-looking, in his stocking feet; yet curiously he seemed to have more dignity than he had shown all day.

"Cy," he said, "I'm sure you haven't failed to cull the important bits out of Carol's reminiscences, as they concern me. That she and not I was doing the blackmailing, and that she admitted that she told me nothing about that will. What I want to ask is this. You speak of fingerprints on those papers as if you knew. I take it you found the handwritten will? And my promise-to-pay? Were they in the writing case? In Aunt Reuben's red-leather writing case that she keeps on the table by her bed?"

"Yes," said Cy. "That's where the things were."

"Then you know," he said, "if you know about the fingerprints on all those things, that my fingerprints are not there. They can't be, because I never touched those things. I haven't seen that paper Carol sold my aunt for a year. Surely you don't think I'm a complete fool, and if I knew about that will and killed my aunt to prevent its coming to probate, knowing my Aunt Reuben I would have looked for it first of all in the writing case, and found it. And surely I would have destroyed it. If as you say it disintegrates me. More than that, I would have seen Carol's signature on it, and knowing that Carol would not do something for nothing, I would have looked for Aunt Reuben's cheque-book in the drawer where Aunt Reuben always kept it, seen the stub paying Carol a whacking sum, and I assure you I would have known what it was paid for, since Carol had already threatened to show that 'promise-to-pay' to my aunt to see if that new angle of blackmail wasn't more profitable than the old, as it evidently was."

"Certainly I would have re-searched the writing case on the chance the promise-to-pay was there, as you say it was, and most certainly of all I would have destroyed that. But I did none of those things. Therefore it would seem to me that I am fairly in the clear as to any motive I might have had to kill her. May I go to bed? Failing that reasonable request, could I at least be allowed to put on some shoes? My feet are cold and Martha's got all the fire. Even Carol's got a blanket."

It was a queer anticlimax, but no one felt it so. The aunt, haggard, dishevelled, discredited Zachary was an object to be pitied. For a moment they all forgot the main issue. If Zachary didn't kill Reuben, one of them did.

"Yes," said Cy. "You can even wash your face and hands. You can go to bed, if you can persuade Bill to stay with you. Bill?"

"I'll wash his face and put on his shoes," said Bill shortly, "but I won't put him to bed. We'll be back."

As they went up the Step and out of hearing, Andree rose swiftly and came to Cy. To grab the thistle and take the bull by the horns was always with Andree a compelling necessity.

"Cy," she said, "I was out in this room and the new kitchen between four and five. And I didn't tell you I

was, so I am a suspect, too, is that right?"

"Yes, Andree, that's right."

"There are things I want to tell you, and something I want you to let me do. Can I talk to you alone? Here, let's stand just inside Miss Reuben's room. No, don't shut the door. You can talk as low as you like."

"Cy, this handwritten will Carol signed. It gives me seventy-five thousand dollars. Remember, I saw the will, as Martha must have told you."

"It is not strictly part of the will, Andree. It is at the top. As to the legality of that will—"

"Cy, I haven't much time. I don't want to be seen by Zachary talking to you. What I want to say is this. My business arrangement with Aunt Reuben was that she invested in the shop and undertook to carry all losses and get fifty per cent of all profits. We have been making a profit for five years. Last year her share was about fifteen thousand dollars. But always, Cy, always she reinvested her profits in the shop. Maybe not every cent, but practically so. My books will show all that. More than that, my shop caters particularly to old ladies, rich old ladies and exclusive old ladies. Aunt Reuben brought me in that trade, and she was my best advertisement, besides. I dressed her up and she went around and while I never allowed anyone to have that exact model, I did make dozens of close adaptations of everything she wore. I keep five tailors and two seamstresses busy all the time."

She drew a quick breath. "Cy, that money in the will, why would I kill her for that money? Alive she was worth more to me than that. Moreover, she told me if I could get the corner Fifth Avenue shop next to mine, she'd find the money to put into it. My correspondence will show that, too. Why, why Cy, would I kill her—aside from all the other reasons why I wouldn't?"

"It's hard for me to believe you'd kill her, Andree. But somebody did."

"But I didn't. Cy, if I could just get you to believe me! If I just could! If I could just get some proof that I didn't! So sitting here I've been thinking. Suppose I told Zachary that I had that new will. Suppose I even showed it to him to prove it. Suppose I told him I'd make a deal with him: half the property he gets from the old will in exchange for this will. He's so greedy for money that I am sure he would fall for it. I'm sure I could get some admissions from him. Will you let me try?"

She looked up at him urgently, while he looked down at her wonderingly, trying to see through her speech into what she might be really after.

"Your idea is that I'm to let you have that paper, which is evidence, and perhaps have Zachary destroy it? That I'm to let you have possession of this will, and give him the chance to destroy that, too? What kind of police officer do you think I am, Andree?"

"A smart one, as well as honest. I know you can read me like a book. You always could. I've been sitting over there shaking in my boots at the third degree I'm due for since—"

"—since Carol said she saw you in the new kitchen when you were supposed to be asleep."

"Exactly. Though everybody heard me tell Lottie I would put the goose in the oven at four. Nevertheless I know it puts me in a hole because I was out there. And I want to get out of it, naturally. You can't blame me for that. And I'm smart, Cy, smarter than Zachary. I can get him to admit something, something important, if it's

there. I'll bet I can even make him believe I saw him."

"Andree, this is a wildcat scheme. And possibly dangerous, too. No, Andree, I won't be party to it."

Andree put her hand on Cy's arm and shook it. "Cy, you know that Zachary is mixed up in this. You know he is. Think of the way the cat behaved, and why was he being so hide-and-seek in the barn? Cy, will you do just one thing for me?"

"That depends, Andree, on what it is."

"This you could do. Suppose Zachary comes back and asks you, in his reasonable manner—you've doubtless noted that he's decided on that line—to let him see this new will, you holding it carefully, of course, so he can't destroy it. If he does, then will you say, 'But I never said I found the will. I didn't. The will was not in that room, not in the writing case when I got here? That's the truth, isn't it? Because Martha gave you the will under the Step. Oh, dear, here come the men. Cy, Cy, try to fix it, will you? For me, and for the chance we might—'"

The footsteps approached the Step, and Andree made a dash for her chair, and sat down just as the men appeared on the Step.

Zachary came first. He was brushed, and washed and had on a clean shirt, and he had recovered his aplomb. He was wearing a pair of brown slippers and was carrying the shoes he had worn earlier, the tan leather and white suede shoes, now dirty and discolored, in his hand.

"Well Cy," he said, almost genially, "have you got a confession yet? No, I don't suppose you have. These women are tougher than they look. Even Martha. You know, Cy, I've been thinking. I've never seen this thing you all keep talking about, this new will. Bill hasn't either. He's a lawyer. He could tell at a glance whether it's any good or not. Any objection to showing it to us? Oh—you keep hold of it, of course. Besides, I'd hardly want to put my fingerprints on it, would I? Lottie can stand on one side of me with the poker, and Carol on the other side with the shovel, in case I try to grab it. What about it?"

**C**Y was unable to answer. He was too taken aback by the almost identical phraseology that Andree had used. Had she had a chance, his mind reviewed swiftly, to coach Zachary?

"And has Aunt Reuben got any white shoe cleaner?" Zachary turned away with a studied carelessness, as if no part of any of this, even the will, really interested him. "I've got to get these shoes cleaned and the toes stuffed out, or they'll be ruined. Twenty-four bucks they cost me, and never worn before. I'll take a look in Aunt Reuben's bathroom, if no one minds."

He started across the room. It was Cy's voice that stopped him. "But I didn't find the new will," said Cy. "I didn't say I did. The will, the handwritten will, was not in that room when I got here. It was not in the writing case. I was hoping you could tell me something about that Zachary."

Zachary spun around. "You mean there isn't any handwritten will?" It was hard to question the honesty of his amazement.

"I didn't say that," said Cy. "I said I didn't find it. There's Carol's evidence that it exists—or existed, at any rate."

"Carol? You mean you'd believe anything that squawk-mouth says? Not that I care, of course. If it existed and



its been destroyed, thank God for that, of course. Though I gather that's tough on the girls. My aunt had money, you know, even if she wouldn't part with a nickel of it. Now, about this white shoe stuff. Got any, Andree?"

"No," said Andree. "It's too early in the season for women to wear white shoes. You're rushing the calendar, Zachary."

Zachary's eyes rested on her. "Well, you look happy," he remarked. "Especially as you've just lost—what was it?—seventy-five thousand dollars."

"You seem sure I've lost it," said Andree. "That's interesting. I suppose you're so sure because you destroyed the will."

"You're a great jumper-at-conclusions, aren't you, Andree?" He went around the end of the couch on which Martha lay, and began tearing up paper from a wood basket on the hearth and stuffing it into his shoes.

Martha had been asleep. She had dozed, and awakened, had heard scraps of what was said here and there, and then in the quiet of the kitchen while the men were gone, she had fallen asleep.

She stirred now, restlessly, and opened her eyes and saw Bill again at his stand in back of her couch.

"I keep thinking," she said, her voice fretful. "I doze off, and then there's something I remember I forgot to tell Cy, and then I wake up and I can't remember what it was. But in my sleep it seems terribly important. What could it be? I don't see what it could be."

A sense of alarm rose in Cy and showed briefly in his eyes before he suppressed it. Wasn't that like Martha to blurt that out in front of them all, including an undoubted murderer. Now he'd have to call in someone and post a guard on her. And probably it wasn't anything. But the murderer might think it was.

Pepot, was what he needed. Just a small piece of solid proof.

Maybe, after all, they'd just have to depend on the cat to turn up something more. "Where's Thomas Aquinas?" he asked.

Bill cleared his throat. "In the front room, asleep on the—blanket that we used to—cover Aunt Reuben."

Andree said, "I'm going to heat you some milk, Martha, and make Cy let you go to bed. Can't we all go to bed, Cy? What's the matter with tomorrow morning to grill the rest of us?"

The telephone rang in Aunt Reuben's bedroom, and Cy was through the door at once. Andree went on into the new kitchen. She could hear what Cy said from there better than in the front room. And she had to write Zachary a note.

**I**N the kitchen, Andree made a clatter of getting milk from the refrigerator and a pan on the stove, and then she was silent. She could hear Cy; so could the others in the old kitchen. But they had got little enough from his conversation. As it concerned them, it was mostly, "Yes. . . . No. . . . Yes. . . . No. . . . Yes." They could not know that what he was hearing was a confirmation of murder, which he did not need, but no clue as to the murderer.

Andree took the grocery list pad and pencil from his hook and wrote rapidly. She had already thought out what she would say. "I'm the one who knows where the new will is. I've got it in a very safe place. What's it worth to you? A fifty-fifty split of the original will. Meet me in the old kitchen as near four as I can make it."

She folded it tight, and closed it in

one hand. While the milk heated, she came and stood in the doorway where they could all see her. Not that they paid any attention to her. Their ears were all strained into the dark of Aunt Reuben's bedroom, where Cy was betting so monosyllabic. Not all, though. Lottie, her poker loose in her hand and leaning on her knee, looked asleep in Aunt Reuben's rocker. She looked grey and very old.

Over the phone, at the other end of Cy's ear, the doctor was being very cryptic.

"Nothing on the—the stick," said the doctor's voice. "You know what stick I mean? Yes. Well, nothing but the two who said they er—you know what I mean? Now on the er, the—"

He was being, Cy thought, really just too cagey about Minnie.

"That wound, Doc. What about it?"

"Polish," said the doctor succinctly. "Er—polish. At least, I'm pretty sure. Got to get it confirmed in Hartford. Just leaving. But the wound fits the er, stick. Stick could have, er, caused death."

"Who's dead?" asked Minnie. "Not that little boy, I hope. I heard he was all right."

"Minnie," said Cy sternly, "get off the wire."

"Well, it's just that accident," said Minnie righteously. "Everybody knows about it. Besides, I'm not people, I'm just me."

"The boy is okay. Now get off the wire or I'll—"

There was a faint click. "Think she's off?" asked the doctor.

"I do," said Cy. "Take a chance."

The writing-case, Cy showed Miss Reuben's prints, Martha's and Andree's, in that order, inside and out. The pocketbook—now, Cy, that's a funny one. None of Miss Reuben's is on the outside of it. Just Martha's and Andree's, over the dust that's on it. But inside, it's got Miss Reuben's prints and some smears of Martha's. The boys can't raise any print on her clothes or hat or shoes, except Reuben's own on the shoes. But lots of nice dust on her clothes and hat and hair. Hartford will have to tell me whether it matches the stuff from under the Step. Oh yes, Bill's and then Martha's on the candlestick. Zachary's—nowhere. Well, that's all. Up off to Hartford. Likely two hours before there's any more."

"If I'm not here," said Cy, "call me at home."

"Hey, you're not going to go away and leave those girls alone with a murderer loose, are you, Cy? Because it's murder, or anyway death, by candlestick."

"No. I won't do that."

"Good. You'll hear as soon as I know about the dust and the scalp scrapings. Bye now."

Cy hung up. He needed additional men to keep guard. And how to call the police station and tell them what he wanted, when he couldn't shut the door of Miss Reuben's bedroom because the microphone was hung on it and it might rattle or fall? And if he fiddled around the door to take it off, some bright mind would surely wonder about that, and even put two and two together and come up with the right answer. He'd send them all to bed and then do it.

Besides, it was time to put a new reel in the tape recorder and he was tired of climbing out the window. He came out of the bedroom. "Andree," he said.

"Oh no, Cy. Not tonight. I know I've got to be third-degreed, but has it to be tonight?"

"I was only going to say, if you'd waited, that I want you to take Martha with you to bed, and be sure she

doesn't get chilled. We'll all go to bed. I'll drive Lottie home."

Martha sat up and swung her feet, swathed in blankets to the floor. She took the cup of hot milk Andree handed her. "It's something about that bedroom," she said. "When you were in there, Cy, I kept feeling that it was something in that room."

"Well, don't worry about it. I'm having the room thoroughly searched and fingerprinted in the morning. Whatever it is will come to light." Two guards, Cy thought. No, three. One on this and Miss Reuben's room, one on the corner cupboard, one on the bedrooms.

"That's nice for the murderer," said Zachary. "All he has to do is wear gloves and remove whatever it is Martha can't remember. Presumably he or she—knows what it is."

"And in the morning," agreed Cy, "when Martha's rested she will remember what it is, and it will be gone, and that—"

"Will point directly to me as the murderer. Because I will take whatever it is to my room and hide it in the toe of my shoe. That reminds me, I hope my shoes are dry. No, they're not. I'll just leave them here. Come on, Bill. Oh, of course, you have to help poor, collapsed Martha. If you took the blankets off her legs she might just be able to walk. Excuse me, but I think I'll just go to bed without being gallant."

**W**ITHOUT waiting for any comment, Zachary crossed the room and mounted the Step. Andree followed him.

"I'll just put Thomas Aquinas out in the bushes before we go to bed," she said to no one in particular. From the Step she called softly, "Zachary," and as he turned she flipped the paper to him. He picked it up, read it, and looked at her. He nodded.

Andree turned back to the kitchen. "He's sound asleep, poor pussy," she said. "I ought to wake him up, but I haven't the heart."

"No," said Zachary's voice at her back. "That about sums you up, Andree. You haven't any heart."

But you'll be here, Andree thought triumphantly. You'll be here at four o'clock.

Cy crossed the room to her. He stood by the Step, where he could see into the front room. "Did he go near the corner cupboard?" he asked in a low voice.

"No. But I wrote him a note. He'll be here at four."

"Andree, this is all foolishness. And dangerous foolishness. I will not give you any of those papers. I can't. And I can't leave this house unguarded. And Zachary knows that, too. What will you gain? Nothing."

"I've already gained something," she said. "He's coming to meet me. Isn't that something?"

"Not much. Curiosity would do that. And he probably expects to get something out of you."

"I'm going to be here, Cy."

"Well, I'll let you try it. I'll be right outside. If you need me, holler. Lottie, Lottie, my dear. Wake up. I'm taking you home."

"Let her get warm first, Cy," Martha, coming across the room with Bill, looked down with pity on the tired, dazed old woman, so different from the wiry, garrulous, busy Lottie they knew. "Go over to the fire, Lottie. Climb in my blankets and get warm."

"Guess I will," said Lottie exhaustedly. "I'm a mite tuckered out, and that's a fact." She got up and crossed



the kitchen, and sat down on Martha's bench, hunkered over the fire.

Cy beckoned Bill to one side. "Keep your eye on things out here for the next fifteen minutes, will you? I'll have a guard posted by then. No one is to touch the corner cupboard or the Step, and no one is to go into Reuben's room. And that means you, Carol, where's Carol? Oh, I remember."

He went around the table and shook Carol. She wailed up into a sitting position. "Now what? Couldn't you have let me be? I was asleep. Dead to the world."

The last phrase brought her wide awake. "No, no, I didn't mean that. I didn't. Do you think Lottie heard me?" She scuttled around the table to join the others. She jerked her thumb towards Lottie and took a firm hold on Bill's arm. "Give me a murderer any time, to being left with her."

The four crossed the front room together. By the blanket they all paused, while Thomas Aquinas woke up, yawned, stretched out his paws, gave a single loud purr, and curled up again.

"He's all right now," said Martha. "Poor old pussy. I shall move out here now to live. Somebody's got to look after Thomas Aquinas and Sally. I should never have left Aunt Reuben in the first place. Never."

She looked up at the corner cupboard, still standing with its doors ajar. "I own that," she said, her voice hard. "I'll have it moved out of here to-morrow."

They moved on down into the bedroom wing, and Bill saw the three girls shut into their bedroom and the door closed. He came back and was standing on the Step, unwilling to go further and disturb Lottie, sitting with bowed head by the fire, when Zachary appeared in the far doorway from the study. When he saw Bill he hesitated a moment, then said, "Thought I'd mix myself a nightcap. Want to join me?"

"Was just thinking the same thing," said Bill. "I'll join you."

Lottie lifted her head and looked around at them. She's old, thought Bill. She's older by ten years than she was this morning. Poor old soul.

"Where's Cy?" asked Zachary.

"In Miss Reuben's room," she said dully. "Telephoning. What are you up to now?"

Cy came to the bedroom door. "What are you doing here, Zachary?" he said sharply. "You've been yelling for the chance to go to bed. Why don't you go to bed? And stay there."

"Is a nightcap against the rules?" asked Zachary amiably. "And can I be allowed to open the bottom of Comfort's cupboard to get the whisky? I'll give you a set of my prints free, if you like, in exchange for a drink. Oh, no, I remember. It's in the kitchen. Andree, like a Christian, laced all our coffee. Speaking of Andree, I have something for you, Cy. Here. Catch."

He flipped the folded square of paper to Cy, who caught it neatly; and while Cy unfolded it, he went on into the new kitchen and came back with the bottle and four glasses.

"Won't hurt you to have a smolt, Lottie. I'll mix you a weak one. Well, what do you make of that, Cy? Speaking of blackmail, Andree's really in the big time, isn't she? Just give her fifty per cent. of my inheritance, and she'll destroy the new will. Written evidence, this time, God bless her."

Cy was studying the paper. It shook him. It shook him not because Andree had written it — though that was a frightful error on her part, since now, in his possession, it was part of police evi-

dence he could not conceal. It shook him because Zachary had showed it to him. Now, what was his game? "Puzzled, Cy?" said Zachary, taking a long drink. "Here, take a swig of your highball and you'll feel better. Think I'd better meet her, don't you? I told her I would, anyway. Better stick around, Cy, unbeknownst to her of course. Might pick up something interesting. Andree's smart, but she isn't as smart as she thinks she is. And one proof of it is that she's always underestimated me."

Cy handed the paper to Bill, took it back, folded it and stuck it in his pocket. "I'll stick around," he said. "But I've got to get Lottie home first." And get, he added to himself these papers, and the house here finger-printed.

He made no move, however, to collect Lottie. He crossed to the kitchen door, and looked out into the night. "Let me think a minute," he said to the room behind him.

But he was not thinking. He was watching for a flashlight signal that the police reserves had come. He had told them to leave their car before it entered the gorge, because in the gorge it could be heard from the house. They were to walk up out of sight and hearing of the house and he would meet them behind the barn, away from the house, where the path cut down to the footbridge across Little Penner Creek.

IT came at last, a swinging flash down the road. Cy flashed on the outdoor light a moment then switched it off. He turned back into the room.

"The light will keep the girls awake," he said. "Lottie and I can make our way in the dark, can't we, Lottie? In fact, if you could wait it, I'd rather leave the car here. I may need it later, and I don't want to be seen driving it back."

"I can walk it," said Lottie, struggling stiffly to her feet. "Been doing it all my life. It won't kill me. And if it does, I don't care much. Not to-night, I don't." She crossed the room, Bill helping her. Cy opened the kitchen door and went out. Bill helped the old woman get her shawl around her, and gave her a hand down the low sill onto the terrace.

"Bill," said Cy softly from the darkness. "The guard is here. Get Zachary to go to bed. Try to be asleep when he sets up at four. Don't follow him. That's an order."

Bill nodded and turned back to the kitchen. A guard, Cy had said. One guard on this great rambling place? It wasn't enough.

"One for the road?" asked Zachary. "Not for me. And I'd say, not for you either, if you're going to keep your wits about you with Andree. Less than an hour from now."

"Right," said Zachary. "Kind of a shock about Andree. Thought I knew her pretty well, too."

"It is that," said Bill shortly. For indeed that note had been a terrible shock to Bill. He knew nothing of Andree's deal with Cy; he did not know that Cy himself had the new will. He did know now, though, that Andree seemed to have the will, and appeared ready to trade it to Zachary for half of what Zachary would get by the old will. So Andree must believe it was legal, and was prepared to trade off Martha's inheritance.

As he stalked with Zachary to their bedroom, he resolved on one thing: when Zachary left the room at four, he would leave too. He would see to it that that will was not de-

stroyed. Even if it was not legal, it was an important paper. He'd best get possession of it. Mentally, he armed himself with a stout weapon to be sure that he got it.

Silence fell over the Penner house. Carol went to sleep. Martha went to sleep. Andree, in her nightgown, but with her dressing-gown and slippers beside her bed, was rigidly awake. Bill and Zachary, each awake and fully dressed, lay under blankets and said nothing. In time, Bill even experimented with some vague breathing noises as if he were asleep.

Outside, at the corner of the house where his eye was on the bedroom windows and the door coming out from the study, stood Ernie on guard.

At a quarter to four, as seen by the illuminated dial of his watch, Zachary rose softly, put on his slippers, and crossed to the other bed, "Bill," he whispered.

Bill grunted. "Huh? Whassat?" he said thickly.

Zachary said, "You don't fool me. You haven't been asleep. I'm going now." He opened the door, slipped out, and closed it softly behind him. Bill waited a moment, then left the bed and opened the door into the study. There was no sign of anyone and he slipped quickly to the outside study door and went outdoors.

Ernie stiffened, and took a noiseless step into the deep shadow close to the house. His business was to watch and not make himself known. But Cy hadn't told him what to do if someone came out of the house.

So he watched, silently, while Bill picked up Lottie's discarded billet, hefted it, and discarded it. Looking for a weapon, by gee, thought Ernie, and shifted his weight, pulled out his gun, and held it by the barrel. For Cy had said, "Now remember. No noise."

I'll find something on the porch, thought Bill to himself, and started around the corner of the house. As he rounded the corner he all but ran into Ernie.

"Pull yourself up, kid," said Ernie. "You ain't going nowhere."

"But I—" began Bill, and then turned and ran back the way he came, on around the other corner of the house.

"Eddie'll get him," said Ernie cheerfully to himself, but nevertheless followed on the run.

Eddie did get him, with a clout on the head from his gun. Ernie got there just in time to catch him as he fell.

"Cruck your handkerchief in his mouth," said Ernie. "Cy said no noise." In no time at all, Bill was neatly gagged and trussed up with two leather belts. All he could do was glare and gurgie.

"Wonder who he is?" said Ernie.

"Who cares?" said Eddie. "He ain't in bed where honest folks should be. If I can get word to Cy, I'll have him take a look. You better get back. Cy said we was to stay put."

Inside his bonds, Bill raged. Anyway, there were two guards, that was something. If he could just tell these fools to go and warn Cy to watch out that nothing happened to the will. The thought of it made him furious. And if I catch pneumonia from this cold, dank ground, he thought with truly legal logic, it will serve Cy right.

It was ten minutes to four by the illuminated dial on Andree's wrist. She slid silently from the bed and into her dressing-gown and slippers, thankful to move her muscles, for she felt stiff from the long effort she had made to be still and not wake Martha. She did not need to look to see if Martha was asleep, she knew Martha was. But she leaned a moment over the other bed. Carol was sound asleep.



She felt one of her nylon stockings, by the bed. Then she softly picked up a heavy round glass paperweight that ornamented the night table, slid it down the stocking into the foot and swung it neatly. Satisfied with its protective quality, she wound the stocking around her wrist, tucked in the end tightly, and dropped the weight and its remaining length of stocking into her pocket. She was ready now.

The window was greying faintly with the lights of coming morning. Had something moved there? She peered out cautiously, and saw Ernie. A guard, she thought, and felt immense relief. She crossed the room, opened the door softly, and slipped into the study.

In the old kitchen, Zachary was standing by the almost dead fire, his hands in his pockets. On the Step, Andree wondered swiftly if in his pocket he had a paperweight in the toe of his sock. But she came swiftly down nevertheless, and joined him.

**Z**ACHARY turned as Andree joined him. "Oh—hello," he said, inanely. "Didn't hear you. You can move quietly, can't you, when you want to. Lucky for me you didn't want to kill me." He emphasised the word "me." "But then, I'm worth more to you alive. I realise that."

"Ready to make a deal?"  
"Certainly. With conditions. Are you?"

"Certainly, with conditions."  
"You know, I'm certainly curious to see that will, Andree. Even though I don't think in a court of law it's worth anything. Only one witness, if one can believe Carol, which is a bit if. Maybe it has no witnesses."

"It has," said Andree. "Carol's."

"Let's see it."  
"Oh, come now, Zachary. You don't think I'm going to pull out that will and let you throw it into that fire, do you?"

"You mean, you haven't got it?"  
"On me? Certainly not. What kind of fool do you think I am, here alone with you in the middle of the night? But I've got a copy of it. You can see that."

Andree took her free hand from the pocket of her dressing-gown, and handed him the copy she had made in the bathroom before she went to bed. She had made a good copy. She had remembered it very well.

He took both hands out of his pockets (empty, much to her relief) and took the paper.

"Um," he said. "You and I don't get much by the will, do we?"

"No. Not by the will alone. But I can get seventy-five thousand from that notation above. If the will is good, that will be good."

"But you think you'll get more out of me. Well, you won't. This thing everybody calls a will is not worth a noot. Carol Carroll as a witness! Why, that isn't even her own name. Besides, a Connecticut will has to have three witnesses signing, and I quote 'In the presence of the testatrix and each other.' Even a handwritten will."

"So that's why you didn't destroy it? Because you knew it was no good?"  
"You mean, that's why you didn't destroy it? Because you thought it was good?"

"Of course I thought it was good. You were the one that knew it was no good, and could safely leave it. You've just told me so. Have you stopped to think what a spot you're in, Zachary? Think what all this publicity is going to do to you. Think what the publicity of Carol's promise-to-pay will do to you. The insurance company will sue, don't you think? And add to that the

evidence of the forged-manuscript deal that Aunt Reuben's got on you—"

"What! Zachary's head jerked toward her. "You mean she kept that?"  
Andree looked at him curiously. "You mean you didn't know? It's in her bank, with your cancelled cheque. You can't get that destroyed, Zachary."

Zachary sat down on the bench and put his head in his hands. "What's the use? I'm done. I couldn't take all this disgrace. And I only did what thousands do and get away with it. Who would dream that Reuben's death would bring out all this. And it was just an accident, Andree. Just an accident."

The last words had a strange effect on Andree. They sound, she thought, as if he has said them over and over to himself. And now they are real to him.

"I know," she said softly, sitting down beside him. "I can't believe, even when you took the candlestick, that you meant to kill her with it."

She waited tensely but he made no answer. But I've broken him, she thought. She must hurry and take advantage of it. But how?

Then, as if called when needed, there came back upbitten to her consciousness a forgotten memory; herself telephoning Reuben's lawyer, Andrew McPhail. At four-thirty, McPhail had said, Aunt Reuben was alive and calling her lawyer. "She told me," he had said, "to bring out forms for a new will. She asked me to come out for dinner. I told her tomorrow night."

But it didn't matter what McPhail had told Aunt Reuben. What did matter was what Reuben had been heard to say. Tonight, for dinner. Bring forms for a new will at dinnertime. Carol, Bill, and the garage boy or Lottie for witnesses. She had been killed before that dinnertime.

Andree drew a long breath. She must chance it.

"When you came in," she said softly, "it was about four-thirty. Aunt Reuben was telephoning Andy McPhail, her lawyer, to come to dinner and bring the forms for a new will—"

Zachary's head jerked erect. "Andree! Were you here? You were here!"

She did not answer but smiled at him. She also took a firmer grip on her paperweight. She did not like the look on his face. She hoped Cy was near, very near.

"You could just as well have hit her with the candlestick as I could," Zachary said violently. "Remember that. If you saw me here at four-thirty, it involves you."

"But Cy knows I was here. In the new kitchen, putting the goose in the oven. Remember? You, however, have sworn you weren't here. And I wasn't the one being disinherited when McPhail came with the will forms—" she leaned forward—"at dinnertime. At dinnertime."

"So you were here," whispered Zachary. "You were here."

"Yes, Zachary," said Andree. "I was here. And I was here, she said to herself, I was here—earlier."

She was beginning to tremble. She thought again of Cy, and took a tight grip on her paperweight. But she must not admit to fear. This was what she had come for. To make Zachary admit things. He had already admitted he was here. She must go on with it. She must stick to things that must surely be so.

"And when she told you she was going through with a new will, you hit her with the candlestick. And the cat. Remember the cat."

The effect on Zachary was beyond anything she had expected. His eyes bulged at her. His face grew dark and

filled with blood. It came to her suddenly that Cy outside the room couldn't see this evidence of facial expressions so convincing to herself. He must turn so Cy could see him.

She rose swiftly to her feet and went around to the back of the couch. He turned to face her, but made no move to follow her.

"The cat," she persisted. "The cat was your mistake. You should have killed the cat. Because the cat knew where you'd put her. Under the Step. Only the cat got away from you. It ran under the Step. And you didn't have time to get it out. And after all, what harm could a mere cat do? Let it stay under the Step, with Aunt Reuben."

But if Andree's mind was working at top speed, putting together the things she knew or Martha had told her, so was Zachary's. Zachary had forgotten for a moment, but was remembering now that Cy was listening. Cy could hear only what was said. And what Andree was saying for Cy to hear was how much she knew. How much she knew. Let her be as circumstantial as she liked. The more circumstantial, the better it would be for him.

"You made a mistake about her purse, too," said Andree implacably. "You threw it under the Step so hard it went through and fell all the way down. Did you know that? Your fingerprints, Zachary, your fingerprints will be on that purse."

"Oh no they won't," said Zachary, almost triumphantly. "No they won't. But yours will."

"That's right, you wiped it. I remember now. You wiped it before you threw it under."

"If you say it was wiped, you ought to know."

"I say it was wiped. And then you moved her away from the Step after Martha found her under it. That was while we were all supposed to be hunting for her. Zachary. You too. But you weren't. You were here to get her out from the Step and into the gorge, to look like an accident. You hit Martha when she ran out for help, so that no one would come and interfere. And then after all you couldn't take Aunt Reuben to the gorge. Remember why, Zachary? Of course you do. Because I came and found Martha."

**W**ITHOUT waiting for Zachary to speak, Martha rushed on. "That hurried you. You put Aunt Reuben in the corner cupboard to move her later. If bothered you not to find the purse, didn't it? But you didn't dare take time to hunt for it. You had barely enough time to put her in the cupboard and run around the house and pretend to me you'd just come in from searching. And you sent us all out again, remember? And you went to the cupboard to move her to the gorge and then—more bad luck. Because the doctor came. Horrible, Zachary, wasn't it? Such bad luck."

"You didn't have time to search Aunt Reuben's writing case and find the will because I came out for cocktails. You didn't have time to take her from the Step to the gorge because I was there, finding Martha hurt. You didn't have time to get her out to the gorge, because the doctor came. But really, the last was a break of good luck, Zachary, not bad. Because if you had taken her from the cupboard, you would have been seen. And who do you think would have seen you? Do you imagine that I left you alone in this house, unwatched?"

"No," said Zachary. "In fact, you've



told me quite an interesting story, Andree. You've told me exactly what happened. Exactly what you did, Andree. Cy will be interested. Yes, Cy will certainly be interested."

For a moment Andree was appalled, until she remembered that Cy knew she knew he was hearing all this. But she still had got no damaging admission from Zachary, except the fact that he had come back to the house at four-thirty.

Or had she even got that? She couldn't remember now the exact words in which he had admitted it.

They were like that for a moment, the two of them; Zachary twisted around to talk over the back of the bench, Andree behind it. And there occurred another of those fortuitous things that no one can predict.

It was a very small thing indeed. It wasn't more than a quarter of an inch long. It was a clothes moth. It came from somewhere and fluttered between them. And Zachary did what anyone does about a clothes moth. He lunged for it with both hands, smacked at it, and missed it.

But the moth had played its part, nevertheless. With the sudden lunge, the sharp smack, Andree gave a cry and flung out her hands. The nylon of the stocking, a resilient fabric and resentful of any effort to make it stay tucked in, loosened as her hands flung out. The weighted end of the stocking flew around, caught Zachary on the bridge of the nose, shot through the door in to the pile of coffee cups on the sink, and skidded into the sink.

There was a cry from Zachary and a clatter of china and pans that was like the crashing of all the brass in an orchestra. Zachary's nose spouted blood, and Andree cried out again and drew back against—suddenly the kitchen was flooded with light and Cy stood in the doorway.

And Zachary was clutching his head and saying, "Cy, you were almost too late. She might have killed me."

Cy said nothing. He went into the new kitchen and came back with the stocking. He poured the paperweight out of it into his hand. He looked at Andree. He paid no attention to Zachary, who pushed by him moaning, "It's broken. I know it is. And my clean shirt—"

Cy spoke sombrely. "Andree, am I supposed to believe that this story you told Zachary of what you say happened is just your imagination? Because it didn't sound like it to me."

Andree spoke desperately. "But I told you, Cy. I told you I was going to make Zachary believe I saw him. I told you that what I was going to do."

"Oh," said Zachary, holding a linen dish-towel to his nose. "Double-crossing me, were you? I should have suspected it."

Cy ignored him. He still spoke to Andree. "And you thought because of that I'd believe anything you said was just part of the act? Remember, Andree, that I know you to be one of the most accomplished liars I've ever come across. When you were a kid we called it storytelling. Often enough I have seen you put on an act that would fool anybody. Now, how did you know Reuben telephoned her lawyer? How do you know what she said?"

"Because we telephoned him. Didn't Martha tell you? Before dinner. About seven o'clock. We thought she might have gone there because of the will. He told us she had called him at four-thirty, and wanted him to come for dinner and bring forms for a new will. And he said he couldn't make it till

morning. But Zachary couldn't hear what he said, only what Aunt Reuben said. He thought the will was to be executed at dinner-time. At dinner-time, Cy. You can call McPhail. He'll tell you I called him and he'll tell you what he told us. And the vet. We called him at seven o'clock, too."

Cy continued to look at her. Martha hadn't told him this. But if Andree did telephone McPhail at seven o'clock, it could be proved. But that was not all this night session had disclosed.

"You said you looked through the window and saw Zachary by the corner cupboard. You say he was going to move Reuben, but the doctor came and interrupted. If you saw this, why didn't you tell me Reuben was in that cupboard? Because you couldn't tell me. Not and get away with her murder."

"No, Cy. I didn't know Reuben was there." Her voice was trembling, and she tried to steady it as she went on.

"It was Martha who saw Zachary. He sent us all out to search some more, but Martha stayed and watched through the window. Zachary did come into the room in the dark, but the doctor's car came, so all he did was turn on the light. Martha told me at the time, but I never thought of it again, and I suppose Martha didn't. That cupboard is new. We aren't used to thinking of it. It should have shelves in it. It never entered my head or Martha's that she was there. I tell you I myself knew nothing about all that stuff I put together for Zachary. All I know is what Martha told me. I just put it together as though I had seen it. I remembered, while I was talking about Martha's seeing Zachary by the corner cupboard. Ask Martha. She'll tell you that she, not I, saw him."

"And how did you know the pocket-book had been wiped? Answer me, Andree! Because it had been, and after Miss Reuben handled it."

**N**OW the charge was so swift, so unexpected, it threw Andree off balance. She could feel panic flaring in her. "But I was just guessing, Cy," she protested. "Because he said his prints weren't on it. He sounded so sure. So I thought he wiped it, of course."

"And his are not on it. But yours are, Andree. Yours are."

"But of course. I handled the purse, after Martha found it under the Step. Cy, Cy, what are you saying? That I killed her? But why would I? I didn't see the new will till evening, and that was after— And even if I had seen it earlier, it doesn't give me anything. I told you, Cy. Alive. Aunt Reuben was worth more to me than she is now that she's—dead."

"You say that," said Cy sternly. "You keep saying it. You keep driving it in. And you are so anxious to pin this on Zachary. You've over-reached yourself, Andree. I've begun to ask myself why? And the answer is simple: whether you ever saw the hand-written will or not before Reuben was killed is no matter. You could not know about it, or you could know about it and know it was no good. What you did know, was about the old one. Because if Zachary is convicted of Reuben's murder, you and Martha inherit equally. With this offer for the land, you stand to inherit close to a quarter of a million dollars. That, Andree, is quite a motive."

"Now you're talking sense," said Zachary smugly. He turned the towel

and applied a clean spot to his nose. "I wondered how long it would take you to get around to it."

For a moment it seemed to Cy that Zachary's smugness was just too much to bear. But it was Andree now that he must drive out into the open. He could see that she was badly frightened. He drove his words into her.

"You put the goose in the oven at four. What did you do then?"

"I went to our bedroom. Martha was asleep. I did my nails."

"For an hour and a half? You did your nails for an hour and a half?"

"I did my nails—ever try to put polish on your left hand, Cy?—and my eyebrows, and cold-creamed my face, and took a bath, and dressed."

"And you never bothered to come back and see how the goose was doing? You ask me to believe that?"

"That's an electric oven. It switches the heat on and off. I set it at three hundred as Lottie told me to, and left it. I did not come back again to look at the goose until five-thirty as Lottie told me."

"Between nine-thirty and ten-thirty that night you all went out to search for Reuben. All of you. During that time Reuben was moved to the corner cupboard. You say you went down to Little Ferner Creek."

"Yes. And if Martha has told you she didn't find me there, nor in the house, it was because I was in the barn loft. I had to pass the barn on the way back. I remembered the furniture in the loft. It occurred to me that she might have gone there and fallen."

"Remember, if you did, your fingerprints will be there. If you didn't they won't be there."

Andree felt a hard hand tighten on her heart. But she held her voice steady as she said, "They won't be there. Everything was filthy dusty. I looked around but I didn't touch anything. Maybe on the rungs of the ladder I touched that."

"A rough ladder. You are quick with your explanations, Andree. What we do know is that you came back. You say you were in the barn, but explain why there'll be no prints. What we know is, after an unknown lapse of time you found Martha hurt in the drive. You and Zachary carried her into the house. And you say, you say, that you never saw Reuben on the floor by the Step."

"I did not see her. I was at the barn when I heard Martha call, and I came at once and hunted for her. I tried to move her to the house, but was afraid I might hurt her. So I went into the house and telephoned the doctor. Aunt Reuben was not there. She was not there."

"You called the doctor?" Cy's question was swift.

"I did. Doctor Connors. You can ask him. It was exactly eleven o'clock. He mentioned the time himself. He said he'd come right along. But he didn't, on account of the road accident. Then I came out again, and Zachary was there and helped me move her to the house."

Suddenly she stood very straight and looked Cy in the eye.

"Cy," she said, "don't make a mistake about this. Because I didn't kill her. And Martha didn't. And I don't think Carol did. And that leaves Zachary. I have something to say to Zachary."

She turned to face Zachary, a slim and menacing figure.

"I made up my mind when the hat rolled out from the cupboard," said Andree. "Her new hat. The feather was broken. And she was lying there on the floor with her new suit all dirty and her hair dirty and her new white



ruckings all ruined. I thought how she would have hated it to be seen like that. But she couldn't hate it because she was dead. But I was alive, and I would avenge her for it. You wouldn't understand that."

"What's all this?" Zachary blustered. "Are we to be treated to some more of your theatrics?"

"I'll tell you what it is," Andree's eyes looked almost green, and they shone hard in the light. "It's this. You may wiggle out of this, Zachary. Just as you've always wiggle out of everything. Cy may never be able to prove you killed her. But if ever you walk out of that door a free man, I will punish you. And I will punish you where it hurts."

**I**N the stillness that followed, the room seemed to grow colder. "I could forgive you for hiding her," said Andree, her voice deadly quiet. "I really don't think you meant to kill her when you hit her with the candlestick. It just made you so angry to know she was cutting you out of her will. And I could forgive you for hiding her. She was dead and you were frightened and you tried to duck the responsibility for that just as you've ducked out of things all your life. But the thing I will never forgive you for is that you tried to cheat her. She loved this land, but you would have sold her out to get part of it away from her for yourself. She gave you everything you've ever had, but you would have cheated her. For that, I will never forgive you."

"Gave me!" Zachary cried out in a kind of torture. "I had a right to it. It should always have been mine. This is Penner's. She had no right to have it all!"

"That idea of yours, Zachary," said Andree steadily, "will land you in gaol some day. I hope it does. And when it does, Aunt Reuben won't be here to bail you out. Everything Aunt Reuben had, everything on this place, was shared with us three. Now I'll tell you what I'm going to do."

Even the silence held its breath. It was some time before Andree spoke again.

"You may escape the law, Zachary. But you won't escape me. You may inherit this place, and sell it, and have for once all the money you want. But it will do you no good. For I am going to punish you, Zachary. I am the one who can. I am the one who knows all the people you know. You are very proud of that smart world you belong in. So here's what I will do." She drew a deep breath.

"There's this new will. There's this note to Carol. There's the record of the forged manuscript in the bank. There's your plan to cheat Aunt Reuben out of her land. If these facts never come out in any other way, I'll see they do. From the day you walk free you will never know. You'll never know what I've told somebody's wife while, say, I'm selling her a hat. When you play golf, you'll never know which man there knows this story his wife told him. When you go to a nightclub, you'll never know who, in that table full of people you join, knows what story. You will come to hate to look in a man's face for fear of what you may see there. That will be your life. Fear will haunt you all the rest of your life. You know I will do exactly as I say. And you know I will never weaken."

It was written on his face: he did know. After another silence, Andree turned to the Step.

"Don't make the mistake of thinking I killed her, Cy. Because I didn't."

I'm going to bed. That guard outside my window will see I don't get away."

She turned and went out of the room. She opened her bedroom door as softly as she could. Carol and Martha were still sound asleep. Daylight was seeping through the windows. She looked out the window, saw the stolid guard, slipped off her dressing-gown and slippers and slid into bed.

She was freezing cold. Suddenly she was shaking, uncontrollably. She huddled up to Martha, hoping not to wake her but longing for Martha's warmth. Martha's solid and unimaginative comfort.

Martha stirred and turned and put her arm around Andree and drew her close. "The pen, Andree," she said drowsily. "The pen. The blot. That's what I must tell Cy." She fell back into full sleep.

The pen? thought Andree. What pen? What about a pen? Full of her own concerns she didn't pursue the thought. I'll never sleep. I'll never sleep again. But Martha's arm held her. Martha's warmth relaxed her. Martha's trusting body close to her comforted her. Martha's simple goodness made what had happened seem like a fantastic dream. She slept.

In the kitchen after Andree left, Zachary stirred nervously and cleared his throat. "I guess it's clear enough to you, Cy, without my telling you, that Andree has all it takes to do a—murder." His voice sounded unreal, and he cleared his throat again. "Is it all right if I go to bed? This—this nose of mine. It's—very painful."

"Go to bed," said Cy.

Zachary crossed the room, and mounted the Step. He hesitated, and turned.

"Just for the record, Cy, I was not here this afternoon—yesterday afternoon, that is—not at four-thirty or any other time."

"Good night," said Cy.

Zachary hesitated a moment longer, as if there was more he wanted to say. Then he turned and went to his bedroom. Cy would have liked to assist him going with a kick.

His thoughts of assault and mayhem were interrupted by a stir at the doorway. Eddie stood there, and with him was Bill, no longer gagged but with his hands still tied. The officer shoved him into the room.

"See what we caught, Cy. Came out the study door and snuck around the house. Ran away from Ernie and into me. Know him?"

It was a relief to Cy to laugh, and he laughed. Bill seemed to find no humor in the situation. He said, furiously, "Will you tell this—this—cluck to untie me?"

"Untie him. Ed. He's just a harmless lawyer, a guest. I'll vouch for him."

"Well," said Eddie, unwinding the belt from Bill's wrists, "how was I to know? I haven't got a second sight. He sure wasn't acting like a harmless lawyer."

"He gagged me," said Bill. "Gagged me!"

"Sure I gagged you, Cy, here, says no noise, and no noise was what we were seeing to."

"Serves you right, Bill. I thought I told you to stay in bed."

"You did." Bill's temper was as hot as his body was chilled. "You said you were posting A Guard. How was I to know A Guard meant your whole police force? I just thought I ought to be around when I could be of some use. Mind if I go to bed? I see breakfast isn't ready. Good night, or rather, since it's daylight, good morning."

He strode for the Step, fury in every stride. He wouldn't even give Cy the

satisfaction of asking what had been happening while he was tied up, even though he was dying to know about that clatter of pots and pans and what not. He told himself he didn't care—it wasn't his murder.

As he leaped up the Step, Cy said softly, "It wasn't Zachary we caught in our net, Bill."

It brought Bill up short. He turned. "Not Martha," he said, his jaw knotting up and his fists clenching. "If you think for one moment—"

"Not Martha, Andree."

The jaw unknotted and the fists unclenched, but there was plenty of fight left in Bill's chin. "Well, Andree's got a lawyer right here to fight for her and against you, Cy. Don't forget that. What have you got against Andree?"

"She knew a lot of detailed things about the afternoon from four to five. It's hard to believe she just guessed at. Though she says she did."

"And why couldn't she? That Andree has been adding two and two together and getting five out of it all her life. Where the rest of us poor fools never get beyond four. Anyway, did you get anything new out of this wild-cat scheme that you can tell me, and don't think I won't use it against you if you do tell me?"

"Yes. And I don't mind telling you. At about seven o'clock, before dinner, Andree evidently telephoned Reuben's lawyer, McPhail, in Hartford, thinking Reuben might have gone there. According to Andree, McPhail said Reuben talked to him at four-thirty in the afternoon about this new will. I shall have to verify this by calling McPhail. But it's too easily verified to be wrong. It means that Reuben was still alive at four-thirty."

Bill thought that over. "Well, I can tell you one thing. It lets Carol out. I didn't keep track of the time, that's true. But Carol didn't have time to kill Reuben, get Zachary to help her, get Reuben under the Step, and then go for an hour's walk with me. Because it was all of an hour. I took that girl through every burr and briar patch I could find. But we were back here by five-thirty, that I know. Andree and Zachary were out here and Zachary was mixing cocktails."

"Which narrows the time still more. And still does us no good."

"Was there anything else?"

"Nothing important," said Cy laughing to himself. He knew how it was going to sour Bill when he found out what he had missed. "Andree whammed Zachary's nose with a paper-weight tied in a stocking, but I think that was an accident! Then she ticked him off, and it was quite a show."

"Good," said Bill. "In fact, wonderful. Well, good night, Cy. I'll go and sympathise like a good hypocrite with Zachary and his nose."

**A**S Bill went out Cy turned to Ernie. "Now that it's daylight I'll have to move the tape-recording machine from under the oak."

The telephone rang. Cy could be said to have leaped through the door into Reuben's bedroom. He snatched the receiver from the hook.

"How are you, Minnie?" said the doctor's cheerful voice.

"In bed asleep, I hope," said Cy.

"What have you got?"

"It's pretty clear the candlestick did it. There's definitely silver polish in the scarp scrapings. And Cy, there's a little bit of fuzz from the felt on the bottom of the candlestick."

"Pretty conclusive. Anything else?"

"Now the purse and her clothes and hat and hair. Dust and fluff on all



## THE FATAL STEP

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of them from under the Step. Dirt from the cellar floor in the hinges of the purse. Martha's and Andree's prints on the purse put on after the dust and dirt got on. Also a fresh ink spot on her dress, but very old and decrepit ink. That meant anything?

"No, I guess not. There's a blot on the letter, too. Probably dropped her pen."

"Well, I'll be along with the lab. report. The police department pays. Be seeing you. Bye."

Cy heard someone enter the kitchen. It was Simms, his fingerprinting man. Cy beckoned him into the bedroom and told him what he wanted. "Start with that bowl there at the floor." Moodily, he sat on the bed and watched. The powder was blown on, the spots examined with a glass, the camera clicked, a notation was made on one of several cards which carried the fingerprints developed from the articles Cy had sent in by the doctor, and Simms moved on.

"Can you give me the tally as you go?" Cy asked.

Simms nodded. "On the bowl: Zachary, Andree. On the table: Reuben and Martha. Martha on top. Closet door: Reuben, Andree on top. Bed-rooms: Reuben, Carol, Andree, Martha. Window-sill: Carol all over Reuben. The phone: Andree—and you."

"Hey, wait a minute. No Reuben on the phone? Sure about that?"

Simms studied it through his glass. "Yes," he said. "No Reuben."

"That's queer. Reuben used that phone at four-thirty. Wiped off? But why wipe the phone off, and nothing else?"

"Because the murderer used the phone after Reuben did, but didn't touch anything else in the room. Ask me something hard, Cy."

Into Cy's eyes came a startled look. Except for the bowl, only Zachary fitted that description. Doubtless Zachary had brought Andree the bowl when she bathed Martha's head. He had helped carry Martha in here. Yet there were no prints of his anywhere else. Was that carefulness? Or just chance?

"I've a cupboard for you next." They went into the front room. "Do the bottom doors first. They're my best hope. And don't worry about the cat's paw marks."

Simms blew dust all over them, inside and out. "Clean as a whistle," he said. "Not even cat."

"Zachary must have wiped them," said Cy bitterly. "Or Carol. A boner on my part. Well, do the top and then we'll do the Step. There's a footstool, too."

Cy felt discouraged and tired. He knew before Simms told him how it would be. Everybody's prints except Carol's were on the upper part of the cupboard, including his own.

"Doesn't prove a thing," said Cy. "The men moved it in here yesterday afternoon. The women helped. Try the Step and the stool. Let's hope we get something."

On the stool all the prints were hopelessly blurred. The back of the Step riser was too rough to hold prints. On the front, there were paw marks and one set of Martha's. Those she had made after closing the Step when she found the purse. So the Step had been wiped by whoever had closed it when Reuben was moved to the corner cupboard. And what good does knowing that do me? None. What I want to know is, who wiped it.

Just Martha, Martha, all the time. Martha found the will and the blotted

letter. Martha found Reuben. Martha found her purse. Just Martha.

Martha. The thought brought Cy up short. Surely, surely he didn't have to consider Martha? But why hadn't Martha told him when she had told him the rest under the Step, that McPhail had said Reuben had telephoned him at four-thirty? Had she really forgotten it, or conveniently forgotten it? Anyway, it narrowed the time when Reuben was killed and it pretty well eliminated Carol. And Bill. Not that he considered Bill even a remote possibility.

Martha, Andree, and Zachary. All three were around and about the house between four-thirty and five-thirty. Zachary in the barn; no witness. Martha asleep; no witness, unless you counted Andree for part of the time; Andree "doing her nails" and dressing, with Martha asleep; no witness.

"Well, that's it," said Simms. "Anything more?"

"No. Go back to sleep and thanks for everything. Wait a minute, though. The barn. Maybe we ought to check it, too. I'll just hide that tape-recorder machine and be along and we'll take a look around there."

Cy stood in Aunt Reuben's room, in the grey daylight, feeling his utter failure. The tape-recorder. It had plenty on it, but no proof of who murdered her. Better take it down. He'd have to bring the motor into the bedroom, and its faint hum might betray it. The bathroom?

He got the machine from the terrace and put it in the bathroom. He led the wire through the doorway, under the dresser, and up over the door to the microphone behind it. He went back to the bathroom, took out the old reel and fitted in a new one, five—or was it six?—feet, and little that mattered on any of them. He went down to the barn.

Martha awakened early, and for the very simple reason that she was being pushed out of bed. Attempting to turn over, she nearly fell off the edge and came awake with a start. Forgetting all the events of yesterday, she raised her head cautiously and saw Andree sound asleep with a wide stretch of empty bed on the other side of her. Why was Andree in her bed? She raised her head higher and looked at the other bed and saw Carol. Then she remembered.

She dropped her head on the pillow, but there was no getting back to sleep for her, certainly not on that foot-wide strip to which Andree had crowded her. Anyway, it was daylight. She might as well get up.

Besides, she could smell coffee, rather horrible smelling coffee, but coffee. So someone else was awake. Company, any company, would be welcome.

Carefully, so as not to wake Andree, she slipped out of bed. She crept around the foot of the bed and looked at Carol fast asleep.

Her slippers were by the bed, and Andree's dressing-gown. She put on the slippers and Andree's gown, to avoid as much disturbance as possible. Nonetheless she opened the door and closed it behind her.

She would get something to eat. She was starved, she told herself, as she went down the Step into the old kitchen.

Thomas Aquinas, sitting on his usual window-sill with his paws curled under him, rose, stretched, said "Meow," and jumped down and came to her. She stopped and petted his head, and he rubbed it against her hand and purred.

The smell of coffee was dreadful, and she rose and rushed into the new kit-

chen. No one was there, but on the low heat, forgotten, still stood the glass pot, charred and smelling frightfully. With an exclamation she pushed it aside.

The other coffee-pot was on a shelf over the stove. She took it down and crossed to the sink to fill it. Her horrified eyes met the mass of broken cups and saucers.

"What in the world happened?" she said aloud.

In spite of herself she began to feel uneasy. She wished someone else were awake. She went to the door into the old kitchen and looked into it. It was in the disorder of chairs and blankets that it had been in when she left it last night.

ZACHARY, in his socks, came down the Step into the old kitchen. Martha started forward to speak to him, and was stopped in astonishment by the look of his nose. It was swollen and red. What in heaven's name had happened to him? Zachary padded across the room, rounded the couch, and picked up his shoes.

"Good morning, Zachary," said Martha. "I'm just making—"

Zachary started so violently that he dropped one shoe. "Martha! Must you scare a person to death? What are you doing up?"

"Making coffee. What happened to your nose?"

"Andree," said Zachary. "She tried to kill me last night."

"Andree tried to— You're joking, Zachary."

"Well, you don't need to believe me if you don't want to. Ask Cy, he'll tell you."

"I will. Where is Cy?"

"I don't know. At home in bed, it he's sensible." He sat down to put on his shoes.

Martha came and stood in front of him. "Tell me what happened," she demanded.

"It was quite a dramatic scene." He put his shoes down in front of him, ready to put on. "Andree wrote me a note. Cy's got it now. She asked me to meet her here at four. And I did. And I told Cy to listen in. So Cy heard everything. And I gave him her note. She was willing to swap the new handwritten will for a half of what I'll get from the original will. Naturally, I—"

"She did not!" Martha's fury burst over. "She didn't, because she didn't have it. I found it myself and gave it to Cy. Cy's got it."

Zachary, about to stoop over to put on his shoe, jerked back. "Cy's got it? You're crazy, Martha. Cy distinctly said he didn't have it. You heard him yourself."

"He said he didn't find it. He didn't. I found it. Oh dear, and he told me not to tell anyone he had it. And I forgot and now I've told."

"Never mind," said Zachary condescendingly. "It's no matter. I wasn't having any part of that dirty blackmail. Besides, the will's no good, you know. You've got to have three witnesses to a will in this state."

"So that's why Aunt Reuben wanted Andy McPhail to come for dinner. She would have three witnesses at dinner-time. She would have Carol, and Bill, and Lottie."

"So you, too, knew McPhail was coming?" He was looking at her curiously. "How did you know?"

"Because I was with Andree when she telephoned McPhail at seven o'clock. We thought she might have



gone there to make the will. He told us."

"O-g-oh." It was a long sound. "So Andree was not out here in the afternoon herself."

"I don't know where she was. I suppose she was. I know I didn't put the goose in the oven. I was asleep." "Or so you say." He stooped over and pulled out the paper stuffing from his right shoe.

Idly, Martha's eyes followed his movements. He had trouble getting the shoe on. It was dry and he stomped and wiggled his toes and stomped again. He joggled the other shoe and it moved. Martha looked at it.

Suddenly Martha knew. She knew what it was she had forgotten. She was electrified into action. She swooped down and picked up the shoe and darted around the end of the couch with it.

"Hey!" Zachary reared up. "What do you think you're doing? Give me my shoe. What's got into you?"

"The ink." Martha was babbling.

"The ink. Her pen. Under the bed. The blot on her letter. It fell, and made a blot on the floor. And you stepped in it, Zachary. It's all rubbly, like your shoes. I saw it. It's there. It fell on your shoe and you kicked it under the bed. See?" She shook the shoe at him with one hand, and pointed to the ink on its white upper surface with the other. It had run with the wetting the shoe had had, but it was ink.

Zachary sat very still. But at the look on his face Martha began backing away towards the outside door. Then Zachary spoke.

"Of course, it's ink," he said carelessly. "I dropped my pen on it. That's why I wanted the stuff to clean it with. Now give me my shoe, Martha, and stop being an idiot."

"Oh, no," said Martha, continuing to back away. "This is black ink. Aunt Reuben's ink. Ink she bought a quart of before I was ever born. She told me. It's not like ink you buy now. And you were trying to move her from the corner cupboard. You sent us all out to hunt, but you stayed. I saw you! I saw you myself!"

Slowly Zachary got to his feet, and slowly came around the corner of the bench. Like a flash, Martha turned and darted for the outside door. She didn't see Zachary turn and run into Aunt Reuben's room. She was nearly knocked down by Cy's dashing past her and sprinting across the room into the bedroom.

"No you don't, Zachary," she heard him say. "Don't touch that spot. Don't touch it."

She heard a scuffle, and Zachary came backwards out of the door and fell against Comfort's cupboard. A teapot fell to the floor with a crash. Cy came out of the room, yanked Zachary to his feet and flung him in a chair by the cupboard.

"Sit there," he said, "and remember I've got a gun."

"You have not got a gun," said Zachary furiously.

"Oh yes I have. See it there?" Cy pointed through the door, where Eddie was standing, his gun out and pointed across the sill.

Eddie spoke. "Lucky for the guy you came when you did. Cy, I might a missed just winging him and killed him. Tell him to stay put or he'll be unlucky."

"You hear that, Zachary? Now, I'll just take a look at that print Martha told us about, and you were so anxious to wipe up. It's one in the eye for us we didn't see it." He looked over at Martha. "Cheer up, Martha. Your forgetting did no harm. I hope," he added, going into the bedroom and thinking

of Simms and himself tramping all over the place.

But his luck was in. The ink blot, and the mark in it of a ribbed shoe sole was just under the edge of the bed and had not been disturbed. Even the half-dry trail of water from the fallen bowl had missed it. He knelt down and looked under the bed. Yes, there by the baseboard was the pen. He pulled out the bed and picked it up in his handkerchief.

He rose to his feet and dusted his knees. A break. A break at last. On Reuben's night table he found a small bottle of ink. He took it and went out. Without a word he stooped down and took the shoe from Zachary's foot. Without a word he crossed the room and took the other shoe from Martha, and carrying the two shoes he crossed the room again, went into the bedroom, and put the shoes and pen and the ink-bottle on the window-sill.

"Shoot to protect those," said Cy. "They are evidence."

**M**OVING briskly, Cy came back to stand in front of Zachary, who sat in his chair with his eyes fixed on his feet. Cy stood so long, unmoving, unspeaking, that finally Zachary looked up. As he did so, Cy, like a flash, reached out and pulled open his coat and took the pen from the inside pocket. As if in the same motion he stepped back and away.

"Hum," Cy said, looking at the pen in his hand. "A ball-point pen. Not like the old inks. Can't even make such a blot as is on the floor in there. Well, a laboratory test will tell what's on the shoe. A new shoe, I remember you said. A photograph will show whether it was your shoe that stepped in the ink. There's a blot of ink on Reuben's suit, and that was also brand new and never worn before you came. We'll test that ink, Zachary, and it will match the ink in Reuben's pen and you know it will. Now, do you want to wait for all that, Zachary, or have you something to say?"

"I've got plenty to say," Zachary's voice was cold and collected. "All right, I was in that room yesterday afternoon. I'll give you that, Cy. I came in and started Aunt Reuben, who was writing that letter to her lawyer. She dropped her pen and I stepped in the ink. That's all there is to it."

"Not quite all," said Cy. "You lied when you said you didn't come back here, for one thing. Why did you come?"

"Because after Carol left I remembered one sentence she did say. She said, 'She's writing her lawyer.' I came up to soothe Aunt Reuben down. After all, Cy, Aunt Reuben has been cutting me out of her will about once a year for the past twenty years. This time, I'll admit, she had cause to be a bit angrier than usual. But I came up to tell her I'd marry and settle down and we'd forget about selling the land. I told her just that. We had a long talk, actually."

Cy said swiftly. "Where? Where did you have your talk? In her bedroom?"

"That's right, in her bedroom."

"Cy," said Martha matter-of-factly from across the room. "This is all wrong. I know it is."

Silently but fervently Cy cursed Martha for the interruption, but he turned to her without a break in his courteous manner. After all, Martha had furnished the only real break they had had. There might well be something more. "You know something more you haven't told me?"

"No," Martha came down the room. "Nothing new. But I knew Aunt Reuben. She never sat in that room

talking to Zachary without straightening up her bed. Those blankets. They're all rumpled. He smothered her. Right there. I tell you she never left that room alive."

"She was killed with the candlestick, Martha."

"I can't help it. But if she was, Andree never could have done it. She'd have to get a chair to reach the candlestick. She would have used something lower down. Anyway, I know Reuben never talked to Zachary in that room. She never let him set foot in that room. If she talked to him, like he says, she made him come out here. And if she was alive when he left her, she would have gone back and folded those blankets. I know. Because I knew Aunt Reuben."

"So did I," said Zachary, looking across at Martha. "After all, I was here. I ought to know whether I talked to Aunt Reuben in that bedroom or somewhere else." He looked up at Cy. The small break had brought back some of his assurance. "It was right there that she had me call up McPhail and tell him not to come to dinner, tell him that she wasn't making a new will."

With an impatient gesture behind his back Cy motioned to Martha not to interrupt, while he said casually, "This was when, Zachary? About what time?"

"About—" Zachary hesitated. "About five, I'd say."

"Then why aren't your prints on the phone? They are not there."

Again Zachary hesitated. "Then he said, 'Aren't they? Perhaps my coat sleeve brushed them or somebody else wiped them off. Andree? Andree was here.'"

"And her prints are on the phone. Why would she wipe her prints off just to put them back? No Zachary, what really happened is, you heard Reuben call McPhail at half-past four and ask him to come to dinner and bring formal for a will. So you killed her and put her under the Step. But you had to stop McPhail from coming, because if Reuben was missing at dinnertime and her lawyer came expecting her to be here to execute a new will ending you out, it would look very suspicious indeed, wouldn't it? So you didn't tell anyone about calling McPhail. And you wiped the phone. Just as you wiped the bottom of the corner cupboard. Don't bother to lie about that, because Carol saw you and will tell us."

He stopped, but Zachary said nothing. He was again staring at his feet, his head bent. Cy resumed.

"Zachary, this is where you stand. Carol was here until after four. At four-thirty, Reuben was alive and telephoning her lawyer. By five—so you say—you had had time for a talk with Reuben, a talk long enough to soothe her ruffled feelings. After five, you called her lawyer and told him not to come to dinner. Though he wasn't coming to dinner and Reuben knew it. Odd, isn't it, that she let you telephone that?"

"That's right. She was here in the old kitchen then. I went to the telephone in the bedroom. Likely she didn't hear what I said."

"Oh. You were in the old kitchen. You said before that you were in the bedroom."

"We were at first. But then we went out into the other room. This room."

Careful to use the same even tone, Cy asked. "Then after you telephoned, you came back out here where Reuben was. Say, at twenty-past five. And you talked a little while more?"

Too late, Zachary saw where he had been led. Cy could see it, in the lifted head, the startled eyes.



And at that moment the moth—or was it another one?—came back into the picture. It fluttered in front of Cy, and Cy did what anyone always does with a clothes moth. He lunged up with both hands and smacked it. His hands caught by the early morning sun made a darling curving shadow on the wall over Zachary's head, poised there a moment, and fell. Martha saw it. She had seen it before.

She flung up her arm and shrieked. "That's it! That's what I saw! He's killing her! I saw it!"

Zachary leaped to his feet. "I didn't! I didn't! I tell you! It was an accident! An accident! I was just hitting at the cat! She was holding the cat and the cat—"

Too late he knew what he had said. Eddie, outside the bedroom window, said, "Don't move." No one moved. They all seemed frozen where they stood. Martha, arrested with her hand pointed at Zachary, stood appalled. Zachary said to her savagely, "If you saw me, why did you wait so long to say so?"

"But I didn't see you," said Martha. "Just the shadow. The shadow on the wall."

Cy said shortly, "Explain yourself, Martha. You were not asleep yesterday afternoon? You were out here?"

"Of course not. I was asleep. I told you."

Cy said sternly, "You say you were asleep. And you say you saw Zachary kill Reuben. What exactly did you see, and when?"

"Last night. The shadow on the wall, when Lottie pretended to take down the candlestick. The hand, the candlestick striking, I saw it on the wall. And then again, just now, when you hit the moth. See?" She lifted her hands into the sunlight, and their shadow hit the wall, curving, striking, falling. "That's what I saw."

"You didn't see Zachary in here yesterday afternoon?"

"Zachary? Oh, no. I was asleep." Slowly Zachary's face drained of blood until it seemed as white as to be lifeless. Thomas Aquinas said, "P-r-r-r!" and got up and walked towards Aunt Reuben's door.

And suddenly like a violent storm without warning, Zachary's face filled with blood, twisting and contorting, and his eyes filled with a glare of fury. His hands grew rigid, and clenched and unclenched, his knuckles white and straining. They were all seeing, and knew it, the Zachary Reuben must have seen in that instant before she died.

With a cry Martha rushed forward and grabbed up the cat and stood facing Zachary as Reuben must have faced him. The wide cupboard full of silver was there beside them. Only this time nothing happened. They all stood rooted there, while Zachary's face returned to normal, and he dropped into his chair, his head bent down and his hands hanging limp between his knees.

At length Cy said, with an odd gentleness, "Don't take it so hard, Zachary. That you've admitted it. We had it on you anyway. The ink on your shoe, and the print of your shoe in the ink. The fact that Martha saw you at the corner cupboard last night, and later you wiped off the cupboard. Your own story, so full of contradictions about what you did between three-thirty and five-thirty."

Zachary said nothing. No one moved. Finally Cy said, "There is no escaping it, Zachary. I will have to arrest you for Reuben's murder."

Zachary gave a deep sigh. "The cat,"

he muttered hoarsely, "If it hadn't been for the cat — The cat jumped at me. I was hitting at the cat. I didn't mean to kill her. It was an accident."

"And it wouldn't have happened," said Cy, a careful sympathy in his voice, "if you had happened to pick something lighter from the cupboard. The candlestick is the only heavy piece there."

"I know. I blame myself," Zachary's voice was stronger. "But the cat didn't give me time to choose. When it jumped, I just grabbed something I could get a good grip on."

"It seems very awkward to me. That candlestick is so high up. Why not pick something handier?"

"I'm tall. And I wanted something heavy. You didn't see that cat when it flew at me. It was like a wild thing. I just picked something, anything, in a hurry."

"Somehow I just don't visualise this, Zachary. And it is important to you. It may make the difference in what a jury will believe. Will you show me where you stood?"

Zachary stood up and came around the cupboard, facing the hearth. Cy stood in front of him, his back to the hearth.

"Was Reuben about this near?" asked Cy. "All right. Pretend I'm holding the cat. He's ready to fly at you. Why did he fly at you?"

"Well, maybe he thought I meant to hurt him. I was talking and I may have waved the candlestick—"

"Oh. You already had the candlestick in your hand. Before the cat flew at you."

**Z**ACHARY stood there, his throat working, his hands working spasmodically. Cy said, "That's all I need, Zachary. You didn't take the candlestick to hit at the cat."

In that moment it happened. Zachary gave Cy a push that threw him against the hearth, whirled about and sped across the room. He was outside it, heading for the barn, before Cy could get his balance. Cy shouted, "Stop him, Eddie!" and ran across the old kitchen, the front room, the study, into the bedroom where Bill lay asleep, and yelled out the window at Ernie. "Stop him! Wing him, if you can. But don't let him get away!"

Cy heard the roar of a motor, the sharp crack of a gun by the barn. But the motor came on, and Ernie lifted his gun. The motor came roaring into the road, and Ernie shot. The car, gathering speed, rushed on. They could hear it, entering the gorge road. Then suddenly there was a crash, crash, crash that fell at last into a splintering silence.

Bill was sitting dazedly up in bed, fully dressed. "What—what was that?" he asked.

"Death of a murderer, I hope," said Cy. He crossed the room and went out.

When Cy arrived back at the house, they were all assembled in the kitchen. He answered their look. "He's dead. He lost control of the car on the curve. It went into the gorge and turned over and crushed his head. We can't get him out until we get the car raised."

He plodded across the room and into Reuben's bedroom. They listened, silent, while he telephoned for a wrecking truck. As he came to the door again he went behind it and came out carrying what looked like a suitcase in one hand and a small thing like a cigarette package in the other. Behind him trailed a long loop of electric wire.

"A tape recorder!" Bill exclaimed.

"That's right," said Cy heavily. In his mind's eye he was seeing headlines. There was a grim time ahead for all of them.

"You mean," Carol gasped, "everything I said is on that thingum you've got there? All that about the—the paper Zach gave me and the cheque and all those things? You mean, that if all get in the newspapers? Oh, please!" she wailed. "If it does, I'll never get another job. Never."

"None of this will get out that I can prevent," said Cy. "Not in the newspapers, anyway."

"You mean I won't get any notice in the papers? Not any?"

"You're a warm-hearted little so-and-so, aren't you," said Andree. "All right. I give up. I'll give you a job. Modelling for me. You don't need either heart or brains for that."

Carol turned to her. "Did you say a job? In your shop?"

Andree looked at her, resignedly. "Yes. On one condition. That I never hear that falsetto or that baby talk again. Carol or whatever your name really is."

"It's Mattie," said Carol. "Mattie Dank. Can you be that for a name? Well, it's Martha, really, so why wouldn't I change it? Oh." She clapped her hands over her mouth and looked with stricken eyes at Martha. "For a model," she muddled through her fingers. "For a model, I mean."

"Don't let it bother you," said Bill. "If I had to go around the rest of my life calling you Martha, I'd probably murder you. There is," said Bill, "only one Martha."

Cy looked at them all and his thoughts were dark. It's great to be young, he thought. You don't grieve long when you're young. It's when you get older that you can't forget. Lottie is the one who will suffer most; half her life is gone. And I, next; for me a landmark has gone, a generation, a way of life, as well as the friend I watched over, and the bulwark I could always count on to find a dollar for a person in need.

Of the two girls, Andree would be the one who would feel it most. Martha had always needed someone to depend on; she had almost started a new life. But to Andree, Reuben had been a close companion, a contemporary, a friend. Well, Andree would be lonely now and would stop playing around and marry, and that, too, was for the best.

"I'll feed Sally," he said, and went out of the house.

It was Andree who followed him, who stopped him with a hand on his arm.

Her face and eyes questioned him. "There will be so much to do today," she said. "The funeral—funerals. Newspaper reporters. Will you tell me what to do, Cy?"

"I'll leave a guard. And McPhail will be here," he said, pressing her hand. "I'll telephone him and hurry him up. Just put McPhail between all of you and the door, with the sentence that you are prostrated. Pull all your curtains. I'll see to the rest." He squeezed her hand and let it go. "You are made of the right stuff, Andree. You've got Reuben's kind of guts. You are very like her, did you know that?"

She watched him go down to his car. What have I left here? she thought. A great deal, surely. Sally and Thomas Aquinas, Cy and Lottie, Martha and Bill, the land — and work.

Aunt Reuben had left a great loneliness; she had also left a great heritage. And she had left, for all of them to take up, that bondage which is responsibility.

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